United Nations A/60/PV.16

General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

16th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 20 September 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Item 9 of the provisional agenda *(continued)*

General debate

The President: Before calling on the first speaker, I wish to thank the Government of Iceland for the gift of this beautiful gavel, made from the wood of a pear tree.

I call on Her Excellency Ms. Ursula Plassnik, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Ms. Plassnik (Austria): We Austrians unfailingly keep the United Nations in high esteem. Let me try to explain why.

Austria became a Member of the United Nations in December 1955. That was only half a year after our full sovereignty had been restored through a treaty concluded with the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France, called the Austrian State Treaty.

Fifty years ago, becoming part of the family of nations was a powerful motive for us. We could build on your trust. We could rely on your help. We later solved complex problems such as the question of Südtirol with you, our partners in the United Nations. And we have since been eager to return to others in need the help extended to us.

More than anything else, it is our own experience that nurtures our confidence in the potential of the United Nations as a promoter of peace and a beacon of hope for so many who face the dire challenges and threats to our societies — be they armed conflict or hunger, terrorism or environmental disaster. We need the United Nations to be relevant, responsive and reliable — today and in the years to come.

Mr. Win (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The reform process initiated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and reflected in the World Summit Outcome document will further enhance that potential. We may not have achieved all we were striving for, but let us not disregard the progress made, for it will — if acted upon — make a difference to people in need of our support, in need of our protection.

Promoting peace is the United Nations very raison d'être. Since Austria joined the United Nations, some 54,000 Austrian peacekeepers have participated in more than 50 missions all over the world. Currently, 1,200 of them are deployed in missions from Kosovo to the Golan Heights and from Afghanistan to Aceh and the Sudan.

It is also in the light of their practical experience that we welcome the new peacebuilding commission. It will provide specific support to people having to cope with the manifold challenges along the path from war to real peace. I wish to say one word on women in that context. Creating confidence in post-conflict societies requires the active participation and deliberate involvement of women. They must become key partners in our peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

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The European Union, as the major donor to post-conflict reconstruction and development, will substantially contribute to the peacebuilding commission's work. It should therefore have a place in the commission.

For us and many people all over the world, the most serious failure of the present reform effort was the lack of agreement on effective and verifiable measures against nuclear proliferation and for disarmament. We must strengthen the multilateral verification mechanisms and enable the International Atomic Energy Agency to make best use of its capacity. We must not abandon our efforts to find common ground on those most challenging tasks.

In this vulnerable world, we need to foster trust between communities and peoples and help to identify shared values. Austria thus strongly supports every form of dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures. In particular, we need to reach out to the Islamic world, both internationally and inside our societies. As a concrete contribution, Austria will host an international conference in November on Islam in a pluralistic world.

Anywhere in the world, individuals will be able to live and unfold in larger freedom only when their fundamental needs of development, security and human rights are met. We need to address those requirements in a comprehensive and integrated manner. We are grateful to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who so remarkably raised awareness on that matter.

The Millennium Development Goals contain specific promises of solidarity. Austria therefore welcomes our continued common commitments, in particular to poverty eradication and the global partnership for sustainable development. In contributing to the funding effort, we will raise our official development assistance to 0.51 per cent of our gross national income by 2010.

Promoting human security is an ever more demanding task. Our decisions on the "responsibility to protect" are a courageous step forward in international relations, but more importantly, they are an offer of hope to those most vulnerable to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We must not let them down. In the words of Simon Wiesenthal, who sadly passed away last night in Vienna, what connects 2,000 years of genocide is "too much power in too few hands". Ten years ago, at this Assembly, Simon Wiesenthal proposed to organize a worldwide conference aimed at reducing hate. He said that "technology without hatred can be so beneficial for mankind, but in conjunction with hatred it leads to disaster" (*A/50/PV.66*, p. 9). Reality has since illustrated the profound relevance of that proposal.

In our globalized world, the concept of neighbourhood has taken on a new meaning. In the eye of disaster, we are all neighbours, no matter how far or close. As the tsunami and recent hurricanes have taught us, there is an emerging sense of shared destiny and responsibility no longer limited to a geographical vicinity. Let me on this occasion express our gratitude to all those private donors who set a mark of living solidarity.

Austria's clear commitment to effective multilateralism is at the very heart of our work in the European Union and the United Nations. It is in that spirit that we are a candidate for Security Council membership in 2009-2010.

Promoting the rule of law is the key to an environment of trust within our societies. It enables individuals to enjoy a self-determined life. For many, the rule of law is synonymous with normality and predictability in their private and professional lives. We therefore welcome the proposed establishment of a rule of law assistance unit in the Secretariat to advise States in their efforts towards the rule of law.

One of the main achievements of the summit was the decision to establish a human rights council, even if the concrete set-up remains to be defined. In our view, we need a standing body with the ability to address urgent human rights issues swiftly and efficiently. That is no mere management question. What is at stake is the new Council's capacity to make a difference for those in need. It is now crucial that negotiations start without delay in order to seize the momentum of the reform.

Human rights are also a matter of education. In the framework of the Human Security Network, Austria has therefore developed a human rights manual that has been translated into all United Nations languages. It is used in training programmes in Austria and abroad and we encourage our partners to make use of that instrument.

Strengthening human rights and the rule of law will increase security. That is true for societies at large, but it is also true for the smallest communities and

individual households. Full respect for the rights of women and children is therefore indispensable in the world of increased justice and equality we strive for. Too many women are victims of violence. We therefore welcome the study currently being prepared by the Secretary-General on all forms of violence against women.

Much remains to be done. The Doha Development Round has to promote improved market access. In our efforts to protect the environment, we have to enhance the use of renewable energy and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. We also need to finalize the comprehensive anti-terrorism convention, as agreed at the world summit, and adopt and implement the counter-terrorism strategy proposed by the Secretary-General.

Real freedom is within reach if we, through the United Nations, join our forces to promote peace, security and justice — not only freedom from want and freedom from fear, but eventually freedom to live in dignity for both women and men across the globe.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Benaissa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco.

Mr. Benaissa (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to begin by congratulating Ambassador Jan Eliasson, on behalf of the delegation of Morocco, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this historic session and by wishing him success in his noble task. I should also like to express to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, Foreign Minister of the brotherly State of Gabon, our sincere thanks and profound appreciation for his efforts as President of the General Assembly during the fifty-ninth session and for the patience and dedication that he showed in his excellent conduct of the preparatory work for the High-level Plenary Meeting, thereby ensuring the success of the summit, which marked the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization.

I should also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for his commendable efforts to improve the structure of the Organization and enhance its working methods and effectiveness.

Last week's summit meeting was a key event in the history of the United Nations and marked a turning point in the Organization's activities, not just because of the impressive number of very distinguished participants, but also because of the importance of the outcome document (resolution 60/1), which was adopted as a result of the contribution of all members.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco supports the proposals submitted by the Secretary-General with a view to ensuring follow-up of the outcomes of the various international conferences on development issues. Although it failed to meet our expectations, the summit outcome document nevertheless reiterated our international commitments; it paves the way for strengthening the role and effectiveness of the Organization and adapting it to meet the new challenges posed by global developments.

The Kingdom of Morocco would like to reaffirm its readiness to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the summit and to participate in the international effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). My country has undertaken a number of proactive national initiatives relating to ensuring respect for human rights and the establishment of an integrated and modern society in which women play an active role in development. Many of these are set out in the National Initiative for Human Development, announced by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on 18 May. That initiative reflects Morocco's willingness to create a development model based on a successful association of modernity, democratization and economic openness. That model is also aimed at achieving a sustained improvement in our human development index, within a spirit of collective participation, solidarity, equal opportunity, the dissemination of knowledge and the provision of basic social services.

The end of the era of ideological division and the rise of a new world order has called the attention of the international community to new challenges posed by the scourges of terrorism, hunger, poverty, backwardness, illiteracy and pandemic disease, as well as the increasing number of refugees fleeing from the disasters of war and destruction and the growing number of ethnic, tribal and religious conflicts and separatist trends.

Since the events of 11 September 2001, the international community has grown increasingly aware of the threat of terrorism and of the need to combat it by all available means and to address its root causes and underlying motives.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which has itself been subjected to the scourge of terrorism, has participated

in efforts to combat it through the elaboration of legal instruments and practical arrangements at the national, regional and international levels. During this session, the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to contribute to efforts to adopt a comprehensive convention against terrorism, thereby complementing its participation in the elaboration of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

As for development challenges, our African continent is the only region that will not be able to achieve the MDGs within the specified time frame unless the international community provides full support. In this regard, African countries acknowledge that they must rely, first and foremost, on their own human and material resources. However, Africa's economic take-off can be achieved only through an efficient and realistic partnership involving all the parties concerned, including donor countries and international and regional organizations. That partnership must be founded on an integrated and sustained process that benefits the existing North-South and South-South cooperation mechanisms.

Convinced of the necessity to collectively combat the ills that are besetting our African continent, Morocco has always taken the lead in supporting and encouraging any initiative aimed at freeing the African peoples from their stark predicament. Thus, on more than one occasion, the Kingdom of Morocco has voiced full support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development as an integrated and comprehensive action plan designed to solve the persistent economic and social problems that have plagued our continent since the era of independence.

On the other hand, Morocco has always shown its readiness to contribute to conflict resolution in Africa by bringing together belligerent parties and by strengthening the ties of brotherhood and good neighbourliness among the States of western Africa, as well as through the participation of the Royal Armed Forces of Morocco in peacekeeping operations conducted under the auspices of the United Nations in Africa.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the decision by the Group of Eight to cancel the debt of least developed African countries. I would also like to recall that His Majesty King Mohammed VI was among the first to initiate such a move. During the first European Union-Africa Summit, which was held in Cairo, His Majesty announced the cancellation of the debt of least developed African countries, opened Morocco's market to their products and granted them customs exemptions.

The success of Africa's economic take-off remains contingent upon the success of regional integration throughout the continent. The Kingdom of Morocco therefore believes that the reactivation of the Maghreb Arab Union is a political imperative, an economic necessity and a historical reality that responds to the aspirations of the peoples of the region and reflects the expectations of our partners, especially those in the Mediterranean region, with whom we are striving to reinforce our partnership as we prepare to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona process.

For those reasons, Morocco is working to reactivate the Union's machinery and to remove any obstacles that might hinder its relaunching on a sound, constructive and meaningful basis. In this context, Morocco would like to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to working closely with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy and Special Representative, as well as with all parties concerned, in order to break the current stalemate and reach a negotiated political solution to the artificial conflict with respect to the Moroccan Sahara. Because of its geostrategic nature, that conflict between two brotherly neighbouring countries, Morocco and Algeria, requires the involvement of our brethren in Algeria in a serious and constructive dialogue with a view to putting an end to it once and for all.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in his most recent Throne Day speech, affirmed Morocco's willingness "to engage in serious negotiations with a view to reaching a final solution that would win United Nations support and grant the inhabitants of the southern provinces autonomy within the sovereignty of the Kingdom and its territorial and national integrity".

Pending the involvement of all parties in that negotiation process, it remains urgent to follow up on the humanitarian aspect of the problem by disclosing the fate of all Moroccan missing persons and prisoners. The International Committee of the Red Cross was unable to establish contacts with those persons or to discover their place of detention. In addition, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should be allowed to undertake a fair and

free census of Moroccan citizens being held in the Tindouf camps in Algeria, who should be freed and allowed to exercise their right to return to their homeland.

The Arab region, which continues to experience recurrent crises as well as new ones equally violent and fierce, looks to the Organization and to other international and regional actors for their assistance in solving them. In that regard, we hope that the ray of optimism that shone recently in the Middle East, prompting us to engage in cautious optimism, will be supported by serious and brave measures that will revive the peace process and put it back on track. The Kingdom of Morocco welcomed the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and considers it an important and positive decision on the path towards full implementation of the road map.

Morocco, which has always striven tirelessly and effectively to keep open the channels of communication and dialogue among the peoples of the Middle East, reaffirms its active commitment to promoting a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict that will lead to the establishment of a final, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East through the reactivation of the road map, the guaranteed establishment of a free Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital, and the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian and Lebanese territories.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, has reaffirmed his resolve to continue to actively pursue and support all peace efforts and to work to preserve the Arab and Islamic identity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its status as a place of coexistence and tolerance among the three revealed religions.

With regard to the situation in the brotherly State of Iraq, the Kingdom of Morocco, although appreciating highly the continuous and intensive efforts to re-establish stability, peace and reconstruction in Iraq, and although following the recent political progress with great interest, affirms that the participation of all constituents of Iraqi society is needed to build the democratic institutions of the new Iraqi State and to preserve its national unity. Moreover, the international community must help the Iraqi people to overcome the ongoing crisis by creating the conditions necessary for peace and stability.

Reforming the United Nations to enable it to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, restructuring its organs and bodies and updating their mandates will require not only that its working methods be improved, but also that the Organization regain its natural and leading role as a framework for constructive dialogue and as a forum for creative interaction among the various intellectual currents and religious and cultural trends.

In that context, Morocco commends the Secretary-General for his decision to appoint a High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations and to establish a new cultural world order based on tolerance and coexistence. We support diversity and unity of visions and goals as contributions to meeting the challenges of the new millennium.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. David Oddsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Iceland.

Mr. Oddsson (Iceland): I would like to join those who have expressed thanks to the Secretary-General for his efforts in recent years to address the very serious issues facing the international community.

Iceland had high expectations for the results of last week's summit, which were met only partly in its outcome document (*resolution 60/1*). Much further work is needed. While most of the key values in the Charter were reaffirmed, it is Iceland's view that human rights and the accountability of States to their citizens were insufficiently dealt with.

The United Nations Charter guarantees equality among nations and provides a basis on which they can live together as good neighbours. However, the Charter not only addresses how relations should be conducted among Governments; it also specifies how Governments should conduct themselves towards their peoples. That is what the Secretary-General has called the accountability of States to their citizens.

Iceland supports the Secretary-General's strong statement on the responsibility borne by the international community in cases of massive human rights abuses or genocide. The United Nations has made significant progress in that respect by recognizing the existence of an international responsibility to protect. The Security Council and other institutions have thus been given a clear mandate — indeed, a clear duty — to act where crimes against humanity are committed.

Democracy and respect for universal human rights are of central importance to security and development. Iceland supports the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund and will contribute to it. We are also strongly in favour of reforming the present human rights machinery. The Commission on Human Rights is dysfunctional and devoid of credibility; deliberations on human rights have suffered accordingly. Moreover, the credibility of the entire United Nations Organization is threatened. There now exists a summit mandate to establish a Human Rights Council, which will be responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. For Iceland, the ideal Human Rights Council would be smaller than the Commission and would be in session all year so that it could respond to emergencies. The composition of the new Council will be fundamental to its effectiveness. It must not include major human rights abusers.

At the summit, Member States committed themselves to making every possible effort to conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Such a convention must unconditionally condemn terrorism. If it is to be fully effective, it must include a legal definition of terrorist acts.

Unfortunately, the threat of terrorism, combined with that of weapons of mass destruction, is not dealt with in the outcome document, which fails to address the proliferation of such weapons. Proliferation is a profound danger which the United Nations cannot ignore but must confront in a decisive manner.

Iceland welcomes the emphasis placed by the document on investing in prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We welcome in particular the proposal to create a Peacebuilding Commission and a Support Office within the Secretariat. Iceland is willing to take part, along with other Member States, in ensuring that both are up and running by the end of the year.

I must express disappointment at the fact that the group of four proposal for reforming the Security Council has not yet received the support it deserves. While not perfect, it remains the most practical basis for reforming the Council. That approach therefore continues to have Iceland's firm support. The Council must reflect the world as it is and be representative. Iceland has previously, in this very forum, expressed its interest in participating actively in the work of the Council in the years 2009 and 2010.

The Millennium Declaration provides a platform to address poverty in the developing countries. Developed countries have committed themselves to providing the necessary support in the form of official development assistance. It is no less important for developing countries to create a transparent and accountable environment that respects good governance and the rule of law, in order to attract domestic and foreign investment, which fosters the growth of a vibrant private sector. It is also important for developed and developing countries to ensure a successful outcome of the current World Trade Organization negotiations.

The Government of Iceland has acknowledged the great challenge posed by the Millennium Development Goals. Accordingly, it will continue substantially to increase Iceland's official development assistance in the coming years.

Iceland is committed to reform of the United Nations and to finding common ways of dealing with threats to international security. The outcome document has serious shortcomings, and the risk remains that the United Nations could be further weakened. Member States must ensure that the process continues and that it will, in the coming weeks and months, deliver on the fundamental issues at hand in the interests of peace and prosperity in the world.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Ilinka Mitreva, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mrs. Mitreva (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): It gives me great pleasure to address this forum and to share with the General Assembly my Government's views on issues of the highest relevance to our Organization. But first of all, let me express our solidarity and heartfelt condolences in connection with the loss of life and the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina in our host country — the United States of America.

I wish to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden on his election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I am sure that under his able guidance we will make substantial progress in implementing the decisions adopted just a few days ago by the heads of State. At the same time,

let me congratulate Mr. Jean Ping of Gabon, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, for a job well done. I would like also to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his skilful leadership of the Organization in what has turned out to be a very difficult year.

The High-level Meeting and the outcome document reaffirmed our commitment to the core values and principles of the United Nations Charter and to effective multilateralism, and it identified areas for future action. The summit has also provided us with a unique opportunity to explore new ways to adapt the United Nations to new realities.

The Organization was created 60 years ago. However, the vision of its founders — to bring about a more secure, democratic and developed world — needs to be pursued more vigorously today. As a wise man once said, we should be both speakers of words and doers of deeds. I am happy that we all agree that we need a reformed, more effective and more credible United Nations.

The high-level segment made a fair assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

The assessment by the world leaders was both realistic and upbeat. They boldly assessed the status of current and longstanding problems — extreme poverty, hunger, disease, the HIV pandemic, child mortality, environmental degradation, lack of good governance, disregard for human rights and the rule of law — and showed strength and resolve in defining steps and actions to be taken or reinforced in order to meet our targets, and they were cautiously optimistic about the deadlines to be met.

Today we live in a world in which our peoples, nations and Governments depend on each other. We must recognize that in this interdependent and globalized world, all threats are threats to us all. No one is immune to them, nor does any single State have a cure.

But how should we proceed? I believe that many of us share the view that, in fact, we already have a multiplicity of documents and agreed positions, as well as many political commitments and adopted declarations. Much has been achieved by the United Nations, and we are proud of that. My own country has also benefited from United Nations efforts — the United Nations engagement in the first-ever preventive deployment mission. That was a good example of the effectiveness of joint efforts and cooperation.

However, turning to the main questions, we have found that we are still lagging behind on some of the issues to which have so strongly committed ourselves. One of the avenues for moving forward involves implementation and visibility. These are not new words. Many promising United Nations ideas and projects have been sidelined due to inappropriate follow-up and inadequate implementation measures, or simply due to insufficient support and funding by the Member States. We should avoid such pitfalls.

The sooner the effects of the implementation of our decisions become visible, the greater international public support will be, and the greater the chances of creating a better world for us and for generations to come. But we should not shy away from sharing that responsibility with all those who can assist us, with those who have the capacity to help promote and implement our goals. There are many positive examples in recent memory, beginning with the greater involvement of regional organizations, the civil sector, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and so on. Let us make greater use of them. We can only benefit.

On this occasion, I will not dwell in detail on the processes of United Nations reform and the strengthening of the Organization. President Crvenkovski elaborated Macedonia's position on those issues here last week.

Macedonia also aligns itself with the European Union statement. Nevertheless, allow me to say a few words on some current United Nations reform issues of particular interest to us. Macedonia supports the view that human rights, the rule of law and democracy should be given a prominent place in the United Nations reform proposals. Freedom from fear could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights, as former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld put it.

It has long been a strong position of my country that respect for those principles, coupled with development, is the best conflict-prevention measure and a vital precondition for peace and prosperity. For that reason, we see great merit in establishing a

peacebuilding commission. I trust that a balanced gender representation on the commission will only lead to its better functioning and give added value to peacebuilding. Furthermore, the establishment of the human rights council must be seen as a powerful tool to regain the values and principles originally envisaged by the creation of the United Nations.

We are very satisfied that the concept of "responsibility to protect" has found its well-deserved place for the first time in a United Nations document and welcome its endorsement.

The democracy fund is a noble idea which deserves our full creative engagement.

Terrorism has turned into the plague of modern times. Since the last session of the General Assembly, many atrocious terrorist attacks have taken place throughout the world. Our firm commitment to fighting terrorism should engender more joint activities and actions. Our struggle must be based on full respect for human rights because it is human rights that terrorists are afraid of and seek to undermine. We need further consolidation of the global anti-terrorist coalition and strengthened cooperation with regional organizations.

The United Nations is at the core of activities in the area of counter-terrorism. The Republic of Macedonia supports the elaboration of the United Nations comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy, as outlined by the Secretary-General in Madrid. I would like to appeal to the Member States to agree on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. This year, we took a significant step by adopting the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which we signed on 16 September. The victims of recent acts of terrorism painfully remind us to move forward.

From the very beginning, the Republic of Macedonia has been a part of the international anti-terrorist coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Peace and democracy-building in those two countries remain among the key challenges to the international community and to the Iraqis and Afghans themselves. I would like once again to reiterate our support for their efforts to rebuild their countries and to create better lives for their people.

Today, my country, Macedonia, is a functional, multi-ethnic democracy. Over the past three years, we have launched and carried out a large number of reform projects. Our hard work has brought us closer to the Euro-Atlantic structures. We have developed genuine partnerships with the Union and the alliance. We expect the European Commission to give a positive evaluation of our achievements and Macedonia to be granted the status of candidate at the December 2005 summit. I firmly believe that the time has come for our European perspective to turn into a European reality. As for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, we expect the invitation to join at the next enlargement summit.

The Government has recently announced its economic programme, primarily aimed at increasing economic growth and reducing unemployment. At the same time, it has intensified the development of a climate favourable to foreign investment and safe business conduct. As a critical complement to economic reforms, Macedonia is also focused on reform of the judiciary and the fight against organized crime and corruption. We have set a goal to do better. The reforms are not easy, but we are firm in our resolve to implement them.

Regional cooperation has become a major characteristic of the foreign policies of all countries in South-East Europe. We have been patiently building a new spirit of cooperation, while at the same time learning the true meaning of developing relations based on mutual trust and solidarity. That includes our bilateral relations, as well as a large number of regional initiatives. Recognizing that reality and the need to cooperate and to build good-neighbourly relations and mutual confidence was not an easy undertaking, but it is the only way ahead. We take pride in seeing the region move forward. The Republic of Macedonia will continue even more vigorously to pursue such policy. There is no alternative to dialogue and all outstanding regional issues should be resolved in that manner.

In closing, I am confident that our deliberations will contribute to better and faster follow-up of the commitments agreed at the High-level Plenary Meeting. I believe that we can soon come up with implementation mechanisms that will give life to what was conceived by our leaders. There were many debates, some of them very contradictory, showing how different we are. But diversity should not prevent us from having a common vision and goals for a better future. That is why we are here at the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Ould Sid'Ahmed, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania.

Mr. Ahmed (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, I am pleased to extend to Mr. Eliasson my wholehearted congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. We are convinced that his wealth of experience and immense talent will allow him to address the international and regional issues on our agenda with confidence and ensure the success of this session, which coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization.

I cannot fail to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon, for his gifted and patient performance at the helm of the General Assembly at the fifty-ninth session and for his tireless efforts to establish the appropriate conditions for the holding of the session and the High-level Plenary Meeting that preceded it.

I should also like warmly to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his colleagues on their intense and consistent mediation and efforts to ensure the convening of this session and the achievement of the Organization's lofty objectives.

I also hail the major efforts made during the intersessional period at the high-level dialogue begun in New York in late June on financing for development and at the Economic and Social Council session on national achievements and steps towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and to implement the outcomes of the international conferences held from 1992 to 2002.

Attaining the objectives of development, security and stability hinges on how effectively we deal with the issues of violence and terrorism. The global nature of the phenomenon of terrorism requires that the question be dealt with in a global manner, through the complementarity of the cultures of nations and a rejection of confrontation and conflict. It is also important not to forget the considerable growth gap that exists between poor and rich countries, particularly since the social, scientific and technical lag is one of the major causes of tension and one that nurtures terrorism and violence in the world. In Mauritania, we condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and we view it as a phenomenon that is alien to our society and our Islamic values of tolerance. We reject violence and extremism and call for mutual understanding, dialogue and tolerance.

It is clear that we must quickly begin a political dialogue, which is the only means to end the conflict in the Middle East and to restore calm there. In this context, my country believes that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a few cities of the West Bank constitutes an important step towards the implementation of the road map and the Arab peace initiatives. Through those initiatives Arab States have proposed to Israel a comprehensive peace and normal relations in exchange for total withdrawal from all Palestinian territories and from Syrian and Lebanese territories, a return to the 4 June 1967 borders, the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a negotiated, just settlement of the problem of Palestinian refugees.

We are following with interest the developments of the situation in Iraq and are anxious to preserve Iraq's territorial unity, the unity of its people, its sovereignty, independence and non-interference in its internal problems, in order to overcome the problems and ensure security, stability and the re-construction of the State, while supporting the transitional Government.

We are following with equal interest the development of the situation in the Sudan, and we give our blessing to the Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. We support the commendable efforts of the Sudanese Government, in coordination with the African Union, the Arab League and the United Nations, to tackle humanitarian, security and political questions related to the Darfur crisis.

Regarding Western Sahara, Mauritania supports the efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General to find a definitive solution to assure stability in the region, a solution that has the support of all parties.

Mauritania today is on the eve of an era that began with an initiative taken by the Military Council for Justice and Democracy on 3 August 2005, which was hailed by the entire Mauritanian people. It put an end to totalitarian practices that caused suffering and led to dangerous derailments that threatened the future of the country over the last two decades. This initiative rests on the commitment of the Council to the Mauritanian people to create the right conditions for the emergence of an honest and transparent democracy and to allow civil society and all legal political actors

to participate in this endeavour with full freedom. The Military Council will not exercise its powers beyond the period necessary to prepare for and set up genuine democratic institutions, and that period will not extend beyond two years. The Military Council for Justice and Democracy solemnly reaffirms respect for all of Mauritania's international commitments and instruments.

In crystallizing this initiative, the Military Council for Justice and Democracy has defined the priorities of the transitional Government. It has established three ministerial committees entrusted with the task of defining the modalities to guarantee proper elections, working together with political parties and civil society organizations to establish an equitable legal system, in consultation with the national bar association. The aim of these efforts is to propose all measures necessary for the emergence of a genuine system of good governance, in which the private sector and civil society participate.

In order to ensure justice and national reconciliation and to enable all people to participate freely and actively in political life, a comprehensive and absolute amnesty was proclaimed on 2 September 2005 for all Mauritanians condemned for political crimes and misdemeanours. At this point in time, no Mauritanian is being prosecuted for any political crime domestically or abroad.

For the first time, the mass media are open to all political parties and civil society institutions. A constitutional law was enacted prohibiting the President and members of the Military Council for Justice and Democracy, the Prime Minister and members of the Transitional Government from standing in the forthcoming elections or supporting any political candidate or party. An independent elections committee was formed to supervise elections, seeking help from any nation willing to help. It is in this context that Mauritania presented a memorandum to the United Nations regarding provision of assistance to international observers invited by the Mauritanian Government to provide technical and logistical assistance for the elections. This is with a view to conducting a constitutional referendum, which will be organized by July 2006 at the latest, as well as legislative and presidential elections to be held before 6 August 2007. The referendums and elections would be held in accordance with the commitment made by the Military Council for Justice and Democracy with the Transitional Government, in order to provide the appropriate conditions for a transparent and open democracy and to facilitate the establishment of institutions that will be truly representative and diverse.

Mauritania is eager to contribute to the development of cooperation and solidarity in the regional context. It is in that context that we would like to reaffirm our total support for the Arab Maghreb, which remains an incontrovertible strategic choice and an ambitious project for the people of the region in their aspirations to greater complementarity and solidarity.

With regard to the African continent, we would like to reiterate the importance we attach to our friendship and brotherly relations with all countries of the continent. We would like to further strengthen cultural dialogue, communications and relations, which we have pledged to do within the Five-plus-Five framework and the Barcelona process, the tenth anniversary of which we shall celebrate this year.

Given ongoing world changes, we would like to see the role and functions of the General Assembly enhanced and to see its decisions implemented. That holds true for other organs of the United Nations, in particular the Economic and Social Council.

The Security Council needs to be strengthened, and to be made more representative by including members from Africa, Latin America and other regional groups, such as the Arab Group, as well as other industrialized States such as Germany and Japan. Finally, the working methods of the Council and its performance need to be improved so that it can achieve its mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Per Stig Moeller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Moeller (Denmark): The conclusion of the summit last week marks the beginning of another busy year for the General Assembly and the Member States of the United Nations. The summit gave us an ambitious new agenda and in the spirit of multilateralism we must do our utmost to meet the goals it set out. Denmark intends to pull up its sleeves and contribute to that undertaking and I encourage others to do the same.

In his impressive report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), issued in March, the Secretary-General

gave us the best possible basis for the necessary and profound changes the Organization must undergo. The spirit of the new interrelated reform agenda is captured in the report's observation that "... we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights" (*A/59/2005, para. 17*). With those words the Secretary-General identified the three pillars of the United Nations in the twenty-first century: security, development and human rights.

The custodian of international peace and security is the Security Council. In October last year, members elected Denmark as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We have — to the best of our abilities — sought to translate the trust bestowed upon us into action: Denmark holds the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee; we work for improvements in United Nations peacekeeping by pursuing a holistic approach to the concept of peacebuilding; we advocate better protection for women and children; and we support a stronger emphasis on the rule of law and the need to end impunity.

The Security Council must clearly demonstrate its will to enforce the decisions taken by it. If not, the Council loses credibility, and the international community loses its only forceful multilateral instrument.

Targeted sanctions are an important instrument for achieving compliance with decisions of the Security Council and for compliance with international law in general. We must continue an intensive dialogue on how best to implement sanctions and how to follow them up to ensure the desired outcome. The approach must always include both carrot and stick — incentive and punishment.

The United Nations plays a central role in efforts to fight terrorism and we support the Secretary-General's outline for a comprehensive United Nations counter-terrorism strategy that will engage the whole United Nations system in the fight against terrorism. We will take an active part in its further development and implementation. We also welcome the new resolution on terrorism adopted by the Security Council (Security Council resolution 1624 (2005)).

As Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Denmark regards itself as having a special responsibility in that field. We have given priority to enhanced cooperation between the relevant Security Council subsidiary organs dealing with terrorism, and we will continue to do so. We have also engaged in dialogue with parts of the United Nations family not previously involved in the fight against terrorism. The aim of that dialogue is to identify their role in helping States that would like to engage more actively in the fight against terrorism, but which lack the capacity to do so. We will continue our efforts to strengthen the synergies between relevant United Nations actors to further strengthen the counter-terrorism capability of the United Nations.

Our efforts to fight international terrorism must be carried out with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is imperative to strike the right balance between, on the one hand, preventive and swift action against terrorists and, on the other, adequate safeguards for the individual, and not least for those who have been unjustly listed.

The summit has sent an important political message about the dedication of Member States to fight terrorism, even if it was not as strong as we had wished. We must now make every effort, at the present session of the General Assembly, to reach agreement on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Any further stalling on that important issue will send the wrong message.

The single most frightening scenario today is that of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of non-State actors. Such possession constitutes a danger to civilizations all over the world. Nobody can claim to be safe today. Everybody must acknowledge the danger and refrain from activities that increase the threat. We need a concerted effort in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. The failure of the non-proliferation treaty review conference, held this spring, to produce an agreement and the lack of new commitments at the summit must not lead to resignation, but rather must spur us to redouble our efforts.

At the same, time concerted action is needed to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, which kill 500,000 people every year. Arms transfers must be transparent. Denmark strongly supports the adoption of an international arms trade treaty. Such a treaty must be legally binding, include all weapons and be United Nations-based.

Denmark favours a holistic approach to peacebuilding. We believe the United Nations is well

placed to coordinate international efforts to assist countries emerging from conflict. Therefore, we have actively supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. This new body will add value to the work done by various actors including the funds and programmes of the United Nations. I urge Member States to ensure that the Commission will be operational by the end of the year, as requested by the summit.

It is a fact that conflicts in Africa continue to loom large on the Security Council's agenda. The slogan "African solutions to African problems" must not lead to indifference from donors. We must increase our assistance to regional capacity-building and, at the same time, be prepared to provide the necessary human and financial resources for conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. To that end, Denmark is sponsoring a major capacity-building programme in Africa in close cooperation with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

The summit confirmed our dedication to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals through considerable donor commitments, as well as the need to pay particular attention to countries in Africa that are lagging far behind. Denmark will remain well above the 0.7 aid target and urges all donor countries to implement the goals decided by the summit. The responsibility, however, does not rest with donor countries alone. In order to ensure sustainable development the world's poor countries must prioritize human development and respect for human rights, tackle national inequalities and curb corruption.

In a closely interrelated and interdependent world, our collective security and prosperity depend critically on the success of our fight against poverty. We must continue to look for new ways to enforce international law and protect those in need. Promoting the rule of law must be one of the main objectives when devising peacebuilding strategies in Africa and when addressing democratic deficits elsewhere.

The President returned to the Chair.

Indeed, prosperity and security will occur only if and when we decide to respect and promote human rights. It is our obligation to address and to act on human rights violations wherever they occur, and we must do so in a spirit of cooperation and understanding. It is our common duty to measure every Member State's actual performance against the universal standards of human rights, including when that means naming and even shaming. Otherwise, we risk undermining important norms of human decency and behaviour. All Governments must remember that they are in office for the people and not for themselves.

For those reasons, Denmark strongly supports the establishment of the Human Rights Council as a permanent, principal organ of the United Nations, as well as the overall strengthening of the entire United Nations human rights machinery, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Sixty years after the creation of this Organization, we should give human rights the necessary attention and priority in order to meet the expectations of the people, whom we are meant to serve.

The grave crimes against humanity committed in Darfur serve as a reminder to the international community. Impunity is unacceptable. Some argue that we face a dilemma every time a country emerges from conflict. They argue that the pursuit of justice clashes with the pursuit of peace. However, peace and justice are not contradictory but, in fact, complementary. The precedent created by the referral of the Darfur situation to the International Criminal Court is promising. It is a major step forward in the fight against impunity and bodes well for the pursuit of international justice.

Lastly, let me briefly address the call by the Secretary-General and Member States, including Denmark, for management reform. The Secretary-General must be given the necessary discretionary powers, accompanied by accountability and independent oversight. We need to modernize the way we work so as to enable the Organization to meet its share of the priorities set out at the summit.

The coming months will be crucial. The outcome of the summit must be implemented. We will be faced with many difficult but important tasks. They will have to be solved in a true spirit of international cooperation. We must strengthen this great institution. It has a vital role to play in the world of today. Denmark will spare no effort in doing its share.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Paul Ngoupande, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Francophonie of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Ngoupande (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to express

heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. We wish you every success in the discharge of your important functions. Your election to the presidency is, of course a reflection of your great personal qualities and experience. But it is also a tribute to your country, Sweden, which has always been committed to United Nations activities, in particular development assistance.

I would like to take this opportunity to express to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon, my deep admiration for his outstanding work as President, including the considerable efforts that he made throughout his term of office with a view to ensuring the success of the High-level Plenary Meeting, which took place from 14 to 16 September. As an African and as a representative of a country member of the Economic Community of Central African States, I cannot but feel great pride in his achievements.

Just a few days ago, a major event took place here at the United Nations — an event comparable to the Millennium Summit, in which leaders from all over the world took part.

I am sure that we all remember how the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session invited us to focus our discussion on the theme, "A stronger and more effective Organization: follow-up to and implementation of the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005".

On Friday, 16 September, late in the evening, a compromise document was adopted, which was acceptable to my delegation, even though it did not respond to all the concerns expressed in the courageous report of the Secretary-General, to whom, once again, my country would like to pay a well-deserved tribute. Some of the bold proposals that he made, in particular those relating to the need to reform the Organization, seem to us still to be entirely relevant, since they would make the United Nations stronger and more effective by adapting it to the challenges of twenty-first century.

The delegation of the Central African Republic believes that the debate on the reform of the Organization, in particular the reform of the Security Council, is far from over. This is not simply a matter of justice for all those who were not present in San Francisco 60 years ago when the Organization was created. The African continent, which really began to make itself heard internationally from 1960 onwards, rightly claims its place within the Security Council on an equitable basis. We can rest assured that the young people of Africa are paying attention to the activities of the United Nations and to our discussions here, and they find it increasingly difficult to understand why our continent is the only one not to have a permanent seat in that body, which is responsible for taking the most important decisions affecting peace and security throughout the world, including in Africa.

In a statement made from this rostrum on Thursday, 15 September 2005, during the debate in the High-level Plenary Meeting, His Excellency Mr. François Bozizé, President of the Central African Republic, underlined the extent to which we, the small developing countries, in particular those that have gone through or that are currently going through major conflicts or political crises, need a strong and effective United Nations.

The recent history of our country makes clear the extent to which international solidarity, coordinated by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, succeeded in helping us to get back on our feet. After almost a decade of chaos, on 15 March 2003 an upsurge of patriotism enabled us to make a consensus-based transition, and we have benefited from the support, advice and expertise, as well as the financial and material assistance, of all of our external partners.

For two years, we were assisted by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Development Programme and other specialized agencies, and by our bilateral and multilateral partners, including France, China, the United States of America, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and, of course, our high-ranking African colleagues, among them the countries of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, under the chairmanship of El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon.

Therefore, the success of our consensus-based transition is to a large extent the success of international solidarity as mobilized by the United Nations. Of course, the national will, expressed first and foremost by the citizens of the Central African Republic at all levels — who are weary of violence and

chaos and yearn for peace — and supported by our political elite as reflected in governmental actions by President Bozizé himself, this national will has been the prime factor enabling us to bring our transitional period and electoral process to a successful conclusion. In this sense, and rightly so, the international community has paid unanimous tribute to the wisdom of the Central Africans, who have chosen to return to peace and national concord.

But international solidarity was a necessary condition that led us successfully to a consensus-based transition and a successful electoral process. That is why, on behalf of President François Bozize and the Central African Government and people, I should like to reiterate to all of our partners an expression of our gratitude.

As the head of State said in his statement on Thursday, 15 September 2005, the Central African Republic is starting on a second stage in its process of return to peace and security, and that is the stage of reconstruction. This is a tremendous challenge in a country that was ruined and subject to chaos for many years. As Central Africans, we are well aware of our prime responsibility, of our collective responsibility as a nation, for the disaster that our country lived through. If only for that reason, the bulk of the efforts and sacrifices to be made in the reconstruction must fall to us. We are fully convinced of that. But we must honestly admit that in the face of the enormity and complexity of the tasks involved in reconstruction, the need for solidarity is still great. In saying that, we wish simply to recall precedents where the international community understood that the best way to avoid a step backwards was to support reconstruction in a strong way. The real victory over violence and disorder is achieved when extreme poverty, which is the prime cause of the frustrations that lead to confrontation, is rolled back. Successful elections and democratic institutions that begin to function and cope with the country's problems are certainly an important advance along the lengthy and difficult path toward peace and stability. But all this remains basically precarious, as long as the legitimate expectations of the population are not satisfied and their hope to benefit from the dividends of peace is not realized. How can this be done in a country that has been bled white, that does not even have the minimum required for life, and on which donors impose the same conditions as they do on countries that are functioning normally? How, when a country is painfully emerging from a long period of chaos, can it find the resources to repay the debt so that it can hope to benefit from additional economic assistance?

These issues and others face the international community as part of its responsibility for managing the emergence from crisis. This raises the question of the ways and means of consolidating peace to emerge from a period of chaos in order to avoid the risk of a return to square one. The Secretary-General very rightly underlined this in his report. The outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting also mentions that. The creation of a Peace-building Commission is, therefore, very timely. This is a sign that there is uncertainty in conflict management, as to discharge a sick person who is convalescence is only just beginning often leads to a relapse. It would be a good thing if this uncertainty could be removed. The moving appeal made by the President of the Transitional Government of Somalia strengthens us in our belief that the best way to avoid relapses, which are very difficult and costly to manage, is to provide strong support for reconstruction.

Whenever a country that has plunged into the abyss starts to raise its head again, it is a victory for the whole of humanity, and humanity cannot stand by while one of its members drowns, however small it is. Emergence from a crisis stands, therefore, as a new challenge for the United Nations. It is a matter of creating the conditions under which a country that is starting on the return to peace and stability can avoid tumbling back into a state of chaos. The solution involves, in our opinion, an additional demonstration of solidarity and generosity from its development partners to support the efforts of the convalescing society.

Our country is convinced that a lasting return to peace involves the participation of people at all levels of Central African society. The quest for peace and stability is not only the concern of professional politicians. Of course, it is important that politicians work tirelessly to develop arrangements that are in keeping with the national interest and that they avoid any radicalization of their political positions in order to give peace a chance. This is the behaviour Central African politicians have exhibited and it explains to a large extent the peaceful outcome of the consensus-based transitional process and the successful electoral process.

But this is not enough to consolidate peace. Those who pay the highest price for the failures of politics must also have their say. Young people, women, peasants, urban employees, private entrepreneurs and the media all have a great interest in being closely involved in efforts and actions aimed at peacebuilding and we should therefore pay tribute to the model of cooperation initiated by the United Nations in the Great Lakes region of Africa. This cooperation, which regularly brings together the heads of State and their ministers as well as various segments of civil society, ensures that discussions related to the quest for peace involve non-politicians as well. This initiative, moreover, has the merit of bringing to the table other countries, either closely or less closely involved in the Great Lakes problems. In fact, no crisis is limited to just one country, there are direct or indirect effects on neighbours. That is why the tremendous work done by Professor Ibrahima Fall should be encouraged and supported.

As far as the Central African Republic is concerned, the priorities of the Government of National Reconciliation formed after the election were clearly identified in the Declaration of General Policy presented to the National Assembly in early August by Prime Minister Elie Dote. There are three focal points for the short and medium term. First, the re-establishment of security throughout the whole country; secondly, the control and stabilization of public finances; and thirdly, the rehabilitation and relaunching of various sectors of the national economy, such as the mining industries, lumber, agriculture and livestock.

With regard to the first point, it goes without saying that no progress is possible without eradicating the endemic insecurity caused by armed bands, especially those who set up roadblocks. Reconstruction of the security and defence forces, which has already begun, and the re-equipment of those forces are matters that the Government is working to resolve. Subregional cooperation is also an important asset, with the active presence of the multinational force of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa and operations carried out by forces from the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Chad along their shared borders. In this connection we should pay tribute to the initiative taken by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Bangui, which organized a meeting of subregional diplomats and defence experts in Yaoundé, from 26 to 27 August. We should also pay tribute to the contribution of France, which is providing the multinational force of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa with valuable logistical support.

Beyond short-term considerations, the major long-term challenges facing the Central African Republic are those of health and education. Education and health care are among the principal objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. The Central African Republic hopes to achieve those Goals by 2015. We know that lasting development cannot be established without strengthening our national capacities.

Having suffered in various ways in recent years, the people of the Central African Republic sincerely aspire to peace and stability. They are determined to strive and sacrifice in order to leave the painful past behind. They need the understanding and support of their partners, chief among which is the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fabio Berardi, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs of San Marino.

Mr. Berardi (San Marino) (*spoke in Italian, English text furnished by the delegation*): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of San Marino, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Jan Eliasson on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I also wish to express to the outgoing President, Mr. Jean Ping, our deepest gratitude for his commitment and determination in fulfilling his mandate.

At the outset, I would also like to express my appreciation for the result of the outcome document. I am confident that, with a clear mandate for our heads of State and Government, we will be able to reach our goals.

The United Nations is at an extremely important and critical juncture. Indeed, the challenge of United Nations reform has become inevitable and necessary in laying the foundations of its future activity. It is now all too clear that the reform will involve its major bodies, working methods and management of human and economic resources. The United Nations structure will be modified with the aim of showing the entire world that the Organization is an efficient and

democratic body that can guarantee peace and development.

The reform, which will lead to tension and require sacrifices, will be criticized by a number of States, as is the case with all difficult compromises. The process will be long and encounter numerous obstacles, but it is necessary and indispensable.

San Marino believes that the reform process already under way will not stop. However, changes will have to be wide-ranging and take account of the need to face important issues, such as the reform of the Security Council. Most importantly, the reform will have to be supported by the widest possible consensus and based on two principles: democracy and transparency. We hope the enlargement will take into account the widest possible geographical and regional representation and that the solution's methods and ideas will not be forcibly imposed or privilege the interests of only a few countries. We endorse the principles of "Uniting for consensus" and are ready to consider any proposal that does not create fractures and can establish a new and lasting balance.

For San Marino, the United Nations must be based upon democracy, which gives it its legitimacy and moral strength. Streamlining structures and procedures is also necessary to greater effectiveness, because it is in the field, among people, that the United Nations really fulfils its mission. Indeed, it is the people who determine the importance of this Organization in the improvement of their lives.

With regard to some essential aspects presently under discussion, San Marino feels that the proposed creation of a human rights council may not solve the basic problem of the Commission on Human Rights, which is politicization. However, San Marino is of the view that human rights protection deserves the same consideration given by the Economic and Social Council to social and economic aspects and by the Security Council to peace and security.

The human rights council should be directly accountable to the General Assembly and have a broad-based composition allowing for the adequate participation of small and medium-sized countries. Moreover, the specific competencies of the new council vis-à-vis the Third Committee should be established in order to avoid duplication of activities and inefficiencies.

The proposed peacebuilding commission is an excellent institutional response to post-conflict situations. The commission should play an important role not only in the resolution, but also in the prevention of conflicts. Moreover, it should find ad hoc solutions for countries in transition from totalitarianism or institutional anarchy to democracy.

In our view, the commission should submit recommendations to the Security Council on measures to be adopted to guarantee consistency in peace interventions, economic recovery processes, the rebuilding of national institutions and public administration, and the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law. Moreover, we believe that the Commission should be composed of members of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as of countries directly involved in specific situations.

Just a few days ago, the majority of the world leaders gathered in this very Hall to discuss what has been done so far to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Over the past five years, development assistance activities have fallen short of expectations. We sincerely hope that the recently concluded summit will promote and encourage stronger commitment by all developed and developing countries.

San Marino has followed very attentively the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General and has actively participated in the discussions of the Panel's report and of the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom", as well as in the negotiations of the outcome document of the General Assembly. We would have liked the latter document to contain more incisive and comprehensive proposals.

San Marino is aware that development is the sine qua non condition for achieving the Millennium Goals. Today, in the twenty-first century, more than a billion people still live on less than a dollar a day and 30,000 children die every day from hunger. Those figures cannot leave us indifferent. Only by eradicating poverty, underdevelopment and epidemics, and by forgiving the crushing debt of developing countries, will collective well-being be achieved.

Peace and security are intimately linked to the Millennium Goals, as they are essential for a country to improve its economic and human conditions. Peace and security cannot be separated from concerns about

terrorism, as evidenced by the numerous recent cowardly attacks. Terrorism must not divert the international community from its commitment to promoting democratization, the culture of peace and respect for religions, ethnic groups and different cultures.

All States must share the responsibility for fighting terrorism and cooperate at the regional and international levels to implement specific and effective preventive measures. Every State must adopt the necessary legislation to break the vicious cycle of terrorism and to prevent its financing through economic and banking cooperation.

The principle of "the responsibility to protect" is an extremely interesting concept. That idea, however, can be accepted only if understood not as a violation of national sovereignty, but as a duty of all States vis-à-vis countries plagued by massacres, genocide and humanitarian crises.

San Marino is closely following developments in the peace process in the Middle East. The decision of the Israeli Government to remove its settlers from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has been one of the most significant steps in the implementation of the road map and Prime Minister Sharon has showed great courage and determination, despite all domestic difficulties, in taking such a decision.

San Marino shares the hope of the international community that the Palestinian Government will also fully respect its commitments and, by completely rejecting terrorism perpetrated by extremist groups, will maintain and strengthen the dialogue and constructive relations responsibly established with the Israeli Government.

We welcome with great satisfaction the recent elections held in the new Afghanistan, now on its way to democracy and with a higher degree of freedom, as well as the elections and approval of the new Constitution in Iraq, which we hope may lead to a real institutional, social and cultural rebirth of that country.

We cannot fail to address and stress the situation of women and children in our discussions on the concerns to be addressed at the beginning of this Millennium and on the development of humankind. Children, in particular, are most vulnerable to war and famine and bear the brunt of adult actions and decisions. Bombings and conflicts, malnutrition, poverty, treatable diseases, child labour and sexual abuse cause them great suffering and death. If people were merely to stop and think of those children, many of the worst events in the world could be avoided.

This year, my country has undertaken a number of humanitarian initiatives in favour of children, mainly in Africa, with the support of our institutions. Let me mention, in that regard, the recent unanimous decision of my Parliament in favour of programmes improving childhood conditions in Uganda.

Poverty and hunger are the prison in which many women eke out their existence, victims of injustice and discrimination. Our inability to free those women, despite all the means available, is one of the major scandals of our day. At a time of economic well-being and progress, though not widespread, complicity with that injustice through negligence or incapacity is unacceptable. The mass media now at our disposal do not allow us to ignore that situation. The implementation of Beijing and Beijing+5 is crucial to demolishing the walls of that prison and to guaranteeing respect and development for the women of the twenty-first century.

Last year, San Marino ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and, last June, Parliament approved accession to its Optional Protocol. I deposited our instruments of accession upon my arrival here in New York. Moreover, San Marino is tirelessly committed to supporting women's complete integration into and equality in its society.

On this occasion, I would express the hope that the international community will strengthen its efforts to protect the environment and prevent natural disasters. To that end, international cooperation is of the utmost importance, and the Kyoto Protocol is a particularly important instrument for our country.

On that subject, I wish to reiterate my country's condolences and solidarity to the people tragically struck by natural disasters, such as those in South-East Asia some months ago and, more recently, along the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico in the United States of America.

The Millennium Development Goals, peace processes, fighting injustice and our many other great challenges may seem impossible to face, but humankind has the necessary resources and

instruments to achieve those objectives and the United Nations is one of the major tools at our disposal. I am confident that the Organization will be up to that noble task. To that end, I express my most sincere wishes to you, Sir, to the Secretary-General and to all colleagues, diplomats and officials who believe in the ideals of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Aboudou Soefo, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Cooperation and Francophonie of the Comoros.

Mr. Soefo (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): Taking the floor for the first time before this Assembly, it is my genuine pleasure warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. Your election was a personal honour to you and a recognition of the diplomatic skills that we all acknowledge. It also enhances the prestigious image of your country. Please rest assured of the support of the Union of the Comoros as you complete your exalted mission.

Your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, deserves our full admiration and congratulations on the effectiveness and devotion with which he led the work of the fifty-ninth session.

I also wish to reiterate our confidence in Secretary-General Kofi Annan and above all to express our gratitude for his tireless commitment to establishing a more just, peaceful and prosperous world.

Our world faces challenges and threats that jeopardize our security and prosperity. And yet, we have also seen unprecedented technological and scientific development. That disparity highlights the stark reversal of our human values and of the basic principles of promoting peace, respect for human dignity and international solidarity.

Is there any need to list the modern scourges that have engulfed every region of the world: extremism, terrorism, ethnic cleansing and others? In addition to that stark assessment of the state of the world — a result of the failure of the human conscience — we have also been struck by natural disasters, including floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves and, sadly, many others.

To cite just the most recent example, Hurricane Katrina, which devastated Louisiana, is a striking illustration of that phenomenon. Through me, the Government of the Union of the Comoros offers its deep sympathy to the United States of America authorities and the entire American people.

Like the victims of natural disasters, the victims of violence and human injustice have no recourse other than this Organization, entrusted with the most noble mission of defending and preserving their dignity. But the Organization will need a new impetus to spur international action worthy of the expectations of our peoples.

We must therefore redefine our vision of world security. We must keep the human being at the heart of our considerations and take every parameter of human security into account. Indeed, there can be no lasting peace while poverty, disease, despair, war and oppression persist. In a word, there can be no peace if we are insecure about our daily lives and the future. There is an ineluctable link between peace and the development to which we all aspire. We must therefore set ourselves a code of good behaviour and create a life in which the law reigns supreme.

We must reinvigorate and re-energize the United Nations in order effectively to prepare it to face the problems of the modern world. At the same time, the composition of its bodies should be as representative as possible so as to enshrine and embody its universality and safeguard the sovereign equality of States, especially the smallest among them. As the supreme global institution, the United Nations should also operate on the basis of rules and norms recognized and approved by all, which will strengthen its credibility. Only thus will we will truly be able to solve the problems of terrorism, addressing them at their roots, and express our sympathy for and solidarity with those who have devoted their entire lives to fighting exclusion and injustice.

At this very moment, I have a deeply considered thought for all those who have fought for noble causes throughout the world. The brotherly people of Palestine offers a perfect illustration thereof. Indeed, the aspirations of the Palestinian people are those of a nation reclaiming its dignity and security. In the interests of all the peoples of the Middle East, the peace process must continue, because building and maintaining peace is essential to our world. It is critical that a Palestinian State be established and allowed to live in peace, security and stability with the State of Israel and its other neighbours.

My country welcomes Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a decisive step in the quest for a timely, just and equitable solution to that long drawn-out problem. We are convinced that this gesture augurs well for the region and peoples concerned.

As for Iraq, adequate conditions must be established to promote genuine progress towards peace, which will guarantee the stability necessary to the country's socio-economic development.

The situation in Asia also deserves the focused attention of the international community. The stalemate in the issue of the Chinese province of Taiwan, to cite just one instance, is not conducive to the promotion of stability in that part of the world. That is why, in its concern for the ongoing prevalence of law in international relations, and in order to guarantee respect for the national unity of countries, the Union of the Comoros urges the General Assembly to heed the legitimate claims of the Government of the People's Republic of China over the Chinese province of Taiwan.

With regard to Africa, we welcome the imminent settlement of certain crises, including in the Republic of the Sudan, where current developments are opening the prospects for effective national reconciliation. The Government of the Union of the Comoros encourages the Sudanese parties to persevere along that path.

As to other crises that remain unresolved, we urge the international community to play a lead role in finding solutions. Indeed, stability remains a paramount condition for the success of Africa's economic development efforts through the New Partnership for Africa's Development and other regional and international initiatives seeking the same goal. Likewise, those efforts will remain inconclusive so long as HIV/AIDS, malaria, drepanocytosis and other diseases continue to rage in our countries. Other threats include drought, famine, locust infestations, extreme poverty and the debt burden stifling the economies of our countries. We therefore commend the initiative of convening a summit to assess the Millennium Development Goals, which should allow for the adoption of new arrangements for the achievement of the Goals by 2015.

Environmental problems affect all States and are a source of genuine concern to us all. Unbridled pollution, the destruction of the ozone layer, deforestation, rising sea levels — in a word, the ceaseless deterioration of the environment — require us all to heighten our awareness of those global threats.

And yet, while such problems may affect any number of States, we should recall that some — the small island developing States in particular — have specific characteristics that must be taken into consideration and addressed with greater attention. The Union of the Comoros itself recently suffered a volcanic eruption that severely damaged our environment. Such continuous threats to our countries call for the timely establishment of mechanisms to prevent and manage natural disasters.

We welcome regional initiatives, including those undertaken by the Indian Ocean Commission, to better manage such situations and we urge the international community also to provide us with its invaluable assistance. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of France, the United Nations Development Programme, and all other friendly countries and specialized agencies of the United Nations that have greatly helped us to grapple with and manage that disaster.

I spoke earlier of the inequalities prevalent in our world. They are manifest at many levels, to be sure, but the socio-economic aspect is the most glaring. Long marginalized in world decision-making, our countries of the South continue to suffer the consequences of our economic fragility. The rules of the game in world trade exclude us de facto from the playing field. Moreover, the paucity of new information and communications technologies in the South is a striking reminder of the vast abyss in that field between our countries and those of the North.

Debt continues to burden many countries of the South, despite the fact that, thanks to a sudden surge of generosity and, above all, responsibility on the part of the wealthy countries, some saw their situation revisited and improved by the cancellation of their debt. That only highlights the urgency of the need to assess the economic and financial situation of the countries of the South in order for them to be genuinely integrated into the dynamic of globalization.

If the disparities in and slow pace of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in general are to be redressed, a world partnership is needed. In that context, special attention must be paid to the least privileged social strata, including by

providing access to financial services through the promotion of microfinancing and microcredit.

Furthermore, we must address and objectively analyse the issue of debt. We must prioritize the cancellation of the public debt of the heavily indebted poor countries, the least developed countries, and the low- and medium-income developing countries. Finally, international action should promote a fair, regulated, open and non-discriminatory trading system, notably by facilitating the developing countries' accession to the World Trade Organization.

The United Nations is an irreplaceable forum. As the crucible of our warning cries and our hopes for a better world, it remains the perfect framework for discussing the world situation and for opening a window on the situation in each of our countries.

With respect to the Union of the Comoros, I am pleased to announce from this rostrum that we have completed our establishment of new institutions, which are now operational. We thank everyone for their important contributions to that end. We now have the two-fold duty to consolidate the valuable achievements of national reconciliation and to promote our country's socio-economic development.

With our development partners, we are therefore striving to reinvigorate our cooperation and redirect it towards the well-being of our people. In the same vein, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is a priority of the Government of the Union of the Comoros.

Furthermore, my country completed a staff-monitored programme of the International Monetary Fund in January 2005 and is working to streamline its public finances with a view to concluding a Facility for Poverty Reduction and Growth programme with the Bretton Woods institutions so as to mobilize the financial resources necessary to implementing its development priorities.

In that respect, the Comoros authorities are also attempting to implement a recommendation from the international community to convene a donors conference on our behalf. I therefore have the pleasure of informing the Assembly that such a meeting, critical to my country's economic and social future, will be held on 8 December in the Republic of Mauritius under the auspices of the African Union. On behalf of my country, I call on the international community to help us to ensure the gathering's success.

I also take this pleasant opportunity warmly to thank the Republic of Mauritius for its generous offer to host that important conference. In particular, we thank Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam for his readiness to co-preside the conference.

In the same vein, on behalf of the Government of the Union of the Comoros, I pay a well-deserved tribute to the Republic of South Africa for its ongoing support for the Comoros and for having successfully coordinated the efforts of the African Union and of regional countries to achieve national reconciliation in my country. The people of the Comoros sincerely and happily welcome the tireless interest of Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, in the future of our country and his willingness to co-preside the donors conference.

I cannot conclude without raising here the issue of the Comorian island of Mayotte. Following a series of consultations held between French and Comorian authorities in their common concern to find a solution that will preserve the friendship and cooperation between the two countries, safeguard the interests of both States and satisfy the aspirations of the entire population of the archipelago, a new process has been launched. It will promote direct dialogue between the two parties with a view to finding a solution that protects everyone's interests in accordance with the law.

The Comorian Government has invested a great deal of hope in the new dynamic. It believes that it can trust the French Republic to strive for a joint and honourable resolution of the situation. I therefore take this opportunity to reaffirm my sincere thanks to all the friends of the Comoros, who have never failed in their support, their encouragement and their solidarity with my country in the quest for a solution to the issue in line with the law. I also wish to assure them, on behalf of the Government of the Union of the Comoros, that they will always be kept up-to-date on developments in the issue and, whenever necessary, involved in the process.

Working for peace means fighting all that fuels extremism and every source of frustration. Working for peace also means investing all necessary resources in development, without which humankind has no dignity. The health of our world depends on our Organization.

Let us strive for its renewal, for more peace, for happiness and for greater human dignity. Let us strive for equal opportunity for all.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bernard Rudolf Bot, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Bot (Netherlands): It is my firm opinion that we achieved important results at our summit. We created a peacebuilding commission and agreed to establish a human rights council. We have good language on development, including unanimous agreement on the Millennium Development Goals, and we agreed on the responsibility to protect. We made progress towards consensus on the fight against terrorism and agreed on some essential management and reform issues.

Some have expressed disappointment about the results of the summit and, indeed, not all of our ambitions were achieved. Does that imply that it is wrong to be ambitious? Of course not. In a world society of 191 Member States, we must accept that the end result of negotiations will always reflect a compromise between different ambitions, and that we have to be tolerant of each other's diverse views and interests.

As regards my own country's expectations, it is a matter of concern that we did not agree on any measures to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — one of the greatest threats to humankind. We had also hoped for more specific agreement on the modalities for the human rights council and would have preferred clear parameters for the use of force, as well as solid language on the International Criminal Court. And the Netherlands would have liked to give the Secretary-General more scope to carry out his management responsibilities.

But all in all, we have made clear progress. So let us now agree to remain ambitious, to move forward with implementing the programme we have agreed, and to allow the United Nations to deliver on our promises. I look forward to the outline of work the President of this Assembly has announced, and I fully support the accountability pact with which the Secretary-General has challenged us.

We have also achieved something else, something less apparent but equally important. We have reaffirmed our political and moral support for a fundamental underlying principle, namely, that we need to build bridges through dialogue and cooperation and that we have to promote respect and tolerance. And we all share the conviction that, in promoting respect and tolerance across the globe, the United Nations has a central role to play.

According to a well-known saying, there is only one thing we cannot tolerate, and that is intolerance. Indeed, the struggle to protect tolerance from intolerance is one of the great challenges of our time.

It is in the interest of all States to take up the fight against radical ideologies that turn people into terrorists. Terrorism, as we all know, is a cross-border threat. People of all persuasions and beliefs are its innocent victims. And so we must respond collectively, both to terrorism and to the radical ideologies that feed and breed it. Rwanda and the wars in the former Yugoslavia are sharp reminders of how the political use of intolerant and racist rhetoric can even lead to genocide or ethnic cleansing.

Still, I do not believe there is or will be a clash of civilizations. But there is a clash between the tolerant and the intolerant within and across our societies, within and across our civilizations.

That is why it is now so important to take on the radical ideologies that foster violent extremism. Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), calling on all States to prohibit, by law, incitement to commit a terrorist act or acts, sends an important message to the hate-mongers.

Mr. Sambu (Guinea-Bissau), Vice-President, took the Chair.

To fight an effective battle against violent extremism and terrorism, we must strike a careful balance between judicial and police measures, on the one hand, and meaningful dialogue on the other. Let us learn from each other in that respect. I believe that peer review in the human rights council could, in future, help us all to maintain that careful balance.

Let us invest in a global culture of tolerance and mutual respect. We must not look at cultural, religious and ideological differences as unbridgeable divides separating adversaries. Instead, we should join forces for a global society in which the quest for greater unity goes hand in hand with respect for diversity.

The best way for societies to protect tolerance is for them to treasure their identity and, at the same time, dare to reassess the validity of their prevailing norms and standards. Recent events in the Netherlands, for example, have confronted our society with the question of how to protect our centuries-old tradition of tolerance from those who would abuse it to sow hatred and division. That process of reflection is an ongoing one, but part of the answer is to constantly remind ourselves that it is wrong to hold an entire community accountable for the deeds of individuals.

Let us all vow to protect tolerance from intolerance. Let us invest in mutual respect and try to change the mindset of those who propagate intolerance and violent extremism. That will require permanent dialogue, with a central role for the United Nations, the only truly global platform we possess.

Serious dialogue can also help to clear up misunderstandings. One of the most striking misunderstandings concerns the nature of secularism, by which I mean the separation of State and religious institutions. That separation protects the freedom of all citizens of all religious backgrounds, as well as of people who do not practice any religion. In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, politicians and political parties may be inspired by religion, as long as the institutions remain separate.

That is precisely why, in my country and across the European continent, there is a place for Islam, just as there is a place for other religions. There is a place for any form of Islam that allows believers to be both Muslims and citizens of a democratic society.

Citizenship means more than just holding a passport. True citizenship calls for an active contribution to the society of which one is a part. It also calls for a society that is open to the many and varied contributions of all its citizens. Radical ideologies that push people to isolate themselves from the rest of society and to reject or even attack the spirit of democracy will run up against our determined refusal to give even one inch, in my country and, I hope, everywhere. For intolerance is a global, cross-border phenomenon, which is why we so urgently need the United Nations at our side.

United Nations reform will mean making good on our promises. It will require determined implementation of the plans and proposals we have agreed on. If we are serious about our effort to build a more humane, dignified and just world, United Nations reform must also strengthen the protection of tolerance from intolerance.

In our fast-changing world, people long for safety and certainty, and that is understandable. But leaders all over the world have a duty to explain that narrow worldviews, with no place for differences, can offer no genuine protection. Without respect for diversity, there can be no unity.

If we want to protect tolerance from intolerance, we should look critically at what we teach our children. How can we expect them to become tolerant adults if they learn in school to despise people of other faiths and ethnicities? It is not enough for Governments to do polite business with other Governments; they should, at the same time, not allow hotbeds of intolerance to exist in their societies.

There is an old saying that we reap what we sow. If we wish to reap a harvest of tolerance and mutual respect, and foster a sense of common purpose, then we must set to work now. Let us begin sowing the seeds of tolerance and mutual respect here at the United Nations, the world's main crossroads of civilizations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Fatoumata Kaba-Sidibé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea.

Mrs. Kaba-Sidibé (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, warmly to congratulate Mr. Eliasson on his outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. My country, Guinea, assures him of its full cooperation as he carries out his important mission.

I also pay well-deserved tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for the competence, effectiveness and devotion with which he led the work of the fifty-ninth session.

I am also pleased to convey to Secretary-General Kofi Annan the deep appreciation, encouragement and support of Mr. Lansana Conté, President of the Republic, for his tireless and praiseworthy work.

The summit meeting at this session of the General Assembly has substantially stiffened our common resolve to promote international peace and security, the rule of law and the right to development. The

assessment of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the renewed commitment of States Members to achieving them are cause for hope.

The Republic of Guinea nevertheless remains convinced that if we are better to meet the threats and challenges we face, we must resolutely pursue the reforms necessary to revitalize our Organization.

In the name of peace and security, the concerted and decisive action of the United Nations system and of regional and subregional organizations, the African Union in particular, has made significant progress in recent months.

In West Africa, and especially in the Mano River basin, hopes for peace are gradually growing after years of turbulence and tragedy.

In Liberia, the political and institutional rebirth under way is encouraging, although many obstacles still hinder national reconciliation and the country's economic revival. It is essential that, in order to preserve their legitimacy and fairness, we do everything possible to prevent October's elections from being manipulated by the forces of destabilization. We therefore call on the international community to give that country the assistance necessary to seeing the transition through and launching its own reconstruction.

In Sierra Leone, the process of national reconciliation is continuing, thereby promoting peacebuilding and development. My delegation believes that adequate financing for the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the transfer of all persons presumed guilty of serious crimes under international law are prerequisites for putting an end to impunity and consolidate subregional stability.

As concerns Guinea-Bissau, my country welcomes the smooth holding of the presidential elections, which herald a positive new era that will be conducive to national reconciliation and a return to constitutional order.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the signing of the Pretoria Agreement on 6 April 2005 has given rise to real hopes that the crisis can be resolved. However, recent developments are a source of concern to us. Our Government calls on all parties concerned to spare no effort to promote a political settlement of the conflict, since peace and stability in the subregion hinge on this.

In Burundi, major progress has been made in the peace process, particularly through the holding of legislative and presidential elections in free, fair and peaceful conditions. Guinea welcomes this and calls on our brothers in Burundi to continue on the path to national reconciliation and reconstruction.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the transitional period is at a decisive stage, problems persist in the eastern part of the country. My country encourages all parties to abide by the relevant provisions of the comprehensive agreement.

In the Sudan, despite the sad death of Vice-President Garang, the establishment of a national unity Government and the political will shown by the various protagonists will help to defuse tensions.

Guinea urges all parties in Darfur to pursue the negotiations that have begun under the auspices of the African Union with a view to achieving a comprehensive, consensus-based solution.

In the Horn of Africa, Somalia has reached a decisive stage with the creation of a Transitional Federal Government. My delegation makes an urgent appeal to the various factions to engage in negotiations with the Government in order to reach a comprehensive peace agreement.

Regarding the Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute, we call on both parties fully to respect the Algiers Accord and to implement the Boundary Commission's decision.

As to the situation in the Western Sahara, Guinea supports a negotiated and mutually acceptable solution. It encourages the parties concerned to enhance their cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Concerning the Middle East, our Government welcomes Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. However, we remain concerned by the occupation of the West Bank, the continued illegal construction of the separation wall and the continuing detention of Palestinian political prisoners.

That is why we appeal to the two parties to respect the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, as well as the Quartet road map. This is the only way to bring about the creation of two States — Palestine and Israel — living side by side in safety and security within secure and recognized boundaries.

In Iraq, despite the holding of legislative elections that led to the establishment of a transitional Government, we cannot but deplore the current climate of daily violence. We agree that everything should be done to help the country's leaders to consolidate the political transition, put an end to indiscriminate violence and build a united, democratic and prosperous Iraq.

With regard to Asia, our Government reaffirms its belief in the principle of one China. We also attach importance to the peaceful and independent reunification of the two Koreas as well as to ongoing efforts to maintain peace, security and stability on the Korean peninsula.

My delegation notes with profound concern the resurgence of terrorist activities throughout the world. We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and in all its manifestations, for it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. We express solidarity with all States that have fallen victim to it.

To eradicate that scourge, my delegation reaffirms the need to tackle with determination its root causes, including injustice, exclusion, poverty and the intensification of social divisions.

We welcome the adoption by the Assembly on 13 April 2005 of the resolution on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and we urge Member States to reach agreement on a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

The seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which were held, respectively, in May and July 2005, shows the concern of States parties to do more to address disarmament-related problems.

However, we note and deplore the fact that the States parties to the Treaty have not yet succeeded in reaching consensus on questions of substance. Hence we urge all States to continue negotiations in order to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime.

With regard to combating the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Guinea has resolutely undertaken to eradicate that scourge and welcomes the adoption of a draft instrument for the tracing of such weapons.

We invite the donor community to provide appropriate support for the implementation of the subregional programme of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The initiative to transform the ECOWAS moratorium into a binding legal instrument merits due consideration by Member States.

Aware of the importance that peoples attach to development goals, of the latter's interdependence and of what is at stake, the Government of Guinea has adopted a national poverty-reduction strategy whose implementation has, regrettably, been compromised by external factors linked to rebel attacks, a massive influx of refugees and regional instability.

My delegation appeals urgently to all development partners to support Guinea in its efforts to implement that strategy, which remains the most certain way of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In that connection, we welcome the recent progress made in the framework of poverty reduction, particularly the commitment of the G-8 to double official development assistance (ODA) over the next few years and immediate debt cancellation for the 18 most indebted poor countries. We commend and endorse all other initiatives designed to increase funds for ODA. We express the hope that the Gleneagles initiative, which represents an important step forward in the right direction, will be translated into reality and will be extended to all least developed countries.

Furthermore, in the context of the current World Trade Organization trade negotiations, we urge Member States to show a spirit of compromise and diligence in order to overcome their differences and come to an understanding on a consensus programme for the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda before the sixth Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. What is at stake is the very future of the multilateral trading system.

Our work is taking place following the High-level Plenary Meeting, as a consequence of which our leaders have adopted an outcome document to guide our actions. The decisions and commitments taken at the summit clearly indicate that a new era has begun. The time for promises has passed, and we must now translate our commitments into concrete action in a

spirit of true solidarity between developed and developing countries, on the basis of a far-reaching reform of our Organization.

By so doing, we will leave to future generations, to which we owe a debt, the right tools to lead humankind towards a better future.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste): Because of the constraints on our time, I shall omit several paragraphs of my statement, the full text of which has been distributed to delegations.

The President, the Prime Minister and the people of Timor-Leste have conveyed to the people and the Government of the United States our profound sympathy for the people of the Gulf states, in particular the people of the city of New Orleans, who were the victims of Hurricane Katrina. President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have spoken touching words of gratitude in recognition of the outpouring of sympathy from so many nations. We must remember that the United States Administration and the American people were among the first and most generous to respond to the tsunami tragedy that befell the peoples living on the borders of the Indian Ocean on 26 December last year.

Only a little more than three years ago, the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, handed over power to our elected President. Since then, we have made real progress in nation-building, peacebuilding, economic development, national reconciliation and enhancing relations with our neighbours. Timor-Leste has acceded to the seven main international human rights instruments, and my Government is committed to fulfilling its obligations. We were among the first in the world to pioneer a streamlined treaty reporting procedure. We are currently drafting our first reports, and all Government agencies are participating in that exercise. The internal political and security situation, including our porous common land borders, is peaceful and stable. A recent report of the World Bank, commenting on the general situation of peace and stability in my country, stated,

> "Most countries emerging from conflict ... relapse into violence within five years. Timor-Leste has avoided that fate, maintained peace and political stability, and established security".

As a result of the unexpectedly high prices of oil and gas, Timor-Leste today enjoys a surplus, which has enabled our Government to increase our public expenditure by 30 per cent during the current fiscal year. That increase will benefit mostly the rural population and the poorest. In addition, we are proud to report that 36 per cent of our national budget is allocated to education and health.

We have fostered the best possible relationships with our neighbours. As of the end of July, we became the twenty-fifth member of the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); our next goal is ASEAN membership. We enjoy special observer status in the Pacific Islands Forum. Without the active involvement of our regional and international friends, the leadership and coordinating role of the United Nations and the engagement of its many agencies, of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the Asian Development Bank, we would not have been able to achieve the impressive progress we have made thus far.

With regard to truth and reconciliation, I shall now address the issue of justice. In an effort to uncover the truth about the events of 1999, the Governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia have established a joint commission on truth and friendship. The commission is mandated to examine serious acts of violence that occurred in the period before, during and after the 30 August 1999 popular consultations sponsored by the United Nations.

We are accused in some quarters of being too preoccupied with forging close relations with Indonesia, to the detriment of justice for past abuses, and in doing so of encouraging impunity. To our accusers, we say the following. We are mindful of the need to accord dignity and respect to the victims of past abuses, and we believe that in the pursuit of justice we must be sensitive to the need to establish a balance between comprehensive justice and national reconciliation in order to avoid perpetuating the divisions of the past and risking the exacerbation of existing cleavages in our society. We believe that our first obligation, as a responsible member of the international community, is to build a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous country. By consolidating nation-building, internal peace and stability and

unshackling our people from poverty, we can contribute to wider peace and stability.

If one were to read the aforementioned World Bank report on the developments in my country, one would reach the same upbeat conclusion about the impressive gains that we have attained in only three years. Let me share with members some additional findings:

> "Timor-Leste, the world's newest nation, was created out of ashes ... Given that the country started from scratch both physically and institutionally, Timor-Leste has done remarkably well".

We have developed a model Petroleum Fund legal and policy regime, which we took directly to the people and to the National Parliament for approval. We do not want Timor-Leste to fall prey to the developing nations' so-called resource curse, whereby God-given resources are squandered. The key principle is that only the sustainable income from our petroleum wealth will be available for current expenditure. Commenting on our Petroleum Fund, the World Bank said that Timor-Leste

> "has adopted a state-of-the-art legal framework for on- and off-shore petroleum production and taxation and a draft savings policy and associated Petroleum Fund Act consistent with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) ... having embraced transparency principles even before EITI existed ... True to stated principles, the Government has adhered to a provisional savings policy for petroleum revenues ahead of the adoption of the permanent savings policy".

I should now like to touch upon the theme of United Nations reform. As we observe the current news coverage surrounding the oil-for-food scandal, with the United Nations painted as the villain, we are certainly disappointed that the Organization we idealize is tainted by allegations of corruption.

In peacekeeping and conflict prevention, we must remember that while the Secretary-General has the responsibility to alert the Security Council to ongoing or potential conflicts that may threaten international peace and security, the ultimate decision to act rests with the Security Council, in particular the five permanent members. The role of the United Nations in the world has not, however, been limited to peacekeeping; it has provided facilities and an environment for informal meetings between parties in conflict, it has mediated hostage situations or border disputes, and it has mobilized resources and coordinated assistance to war-torn countries or to communities affected by natural disasters.

While we all agree that our collective Organization has failed at times, those shortcomings and failures should not obscure its virtues and successes. The United Nations can become more effective if regional bodies do their share in addressing the challenges in their respective regions.

Much has been said and written about the need for a thorough review of the United Nations system, and much of the debate has been focused on the Security Council, overshadowing all other issues, including the much-needed reform of the General Assembly itself. Reform is also urgent in regard to the existing human rights system. The proliferation of treaty bodies and agenda items results in a morass of duplication, waste, inefficiency and loss of focus.

The General Assembly remains the prime organ of the United Nations that brings together all nations, rich and poor, large and small. The endless and repetitive yearly general debate and agenda must be reviewed in order to shorten it and make it more focused.

I now turn to the Commission on Human Rights. No country or group has a monopoly on selectivity. We are all good practitioners, focusing our attention on issues that are often remote from our shores or that do not collide with friendships, alliances or interests. Timor-Leste fully endorses the establishment of a Human Rights Council and is prepared to serve in such a body if we are asked to do so.

Timor-Leste strongly supports the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission, which will play a critical role in post-conflict situations. The merits are *sui generis*. In view of our unique and rich experience, Timor-Leste would be pleased to serve on that new body if our friends believe we can be useful there.

There is agreement that the Economic and Social Council must be reformed. It seems to duplicate or add little value to its subsidiary bodies. We do not support expanding the Council's mandate to include managing United Nations post-conflict activities.

A permanent member of the Security Council should not limit its peacekeeping contributions to eloquent rhetoric while refraining from providing the troops necessary to back up its words. We are all capable of delivering eloquent speeches with apparent moral force, but we do not all have the same political will, courage or raw power to match our words.

Aspiring Security Council members, permanent and non-permanent alike, should be countries with stable and open political systems and with effective credible national leaderships that inspire trust and respect in their respective regions and throughout the world as a whole.

My Government holds the view that regional balance remains a sine-qua-non principle as should representation of civilizations. Asia, which contains half of the world's population, is grossly underrepresented in the United Nations system and will remain so, even with the possible addition of India and Japan. Timor-Leste supports the G-4 initiative, because we believe that the four countries concerned fulfil every reasonable qualifying criterion for permanent membership in the Security Council.

Timor-Leste, which has an overwhelmingly Catholic majority population, is proud to have been the first country to draw the attention of this body to the need to insure that the Muslim world be adequately represented in an expanded Security Council. We continue to believe that Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, with the third largest population in our region and the third largest Asian democracy, is uniquely suited for permanent member status.

I wish now to touch on an issue that has been very much in the news in the last few months: Japan and its neighbours. Timor-Leste understands the reservations of certain countries that do not wish to see too large a Security Council; we understand the reluctance of some of the current permanent five to abandon or share privileges with new ones. We understand that countries that were invaded and colonized by Japan during the Second World War are not receptive to their former aggressor. Timor-Leste, too, was occupied by Japan during the Second World War. But we also remember how the proud Japanese people were made to pay an extraordinary price for their Second World War sins. Hiroshima stands as the living reminder of that horrible price.

Japanese leaders were brought to trial at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and paid for their crimes. A defeated Japan was effectively occupied and administered by the victorious American Power. This benign occupier charted the course of the new Japan, which today is a world economic Power, a peaceful and vibrant democracy that has made enormous contributions to the well-being of developing countries and the United Nations system.

Allow me now to share with the Assembly my Government's concern on some key international issues — the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iraq.

First, we commend Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for his courage in disengaging from Gaza. We hope that this is only a first step towards the full implementation of the road map leading to the establishment of a democratic Palestinian State. The new Palestinian leaders and people deserve equal praise for their moderation and statesmanship, patience and tolerance.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, local extremist elements and foreign mercenaries continue their campaign of terror to reverse the democratic gains made by the people of the two countries. The international community and, in particular, the neighbouring countries, have a special duty to provide all necessary support to the brave peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq in their struggle to consolidate their hard-won freedoms; the neighbouring countries must do more to prevent their territories from being used as springboards for the infiltration of mercenaries and weapons into Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on The Honourable Laurie Chan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Solomon Islands.

Mr. Chan (Solomon Islands): I bring warm greetings, Sir, from the Government and people of Solomon Islands, and I wish to congratulate the President on his election to lead the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I would like to assure him of Solomon Islands' support and cooperation during his term in office as he guides the work of the Assembly over the next 12 months.

My delegation would also like to commend and register its deep appreciation to his predecessor, our colleague, the Honourable Jean Ping, Foreign Minister of Gabon, for his invaluable contribution and able leadership of the proceedings of fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Solomon Islands also extends its gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his vision, dedication and leadership in making the United Nations relevant and responsive to today's threats.

This Organization rose out of the ashes of the Second World War with the sole purpose of ensuring that never again would the world allow crimes against humanity to flourish. Sixty years on, genocide, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and hunger continue to claim millions of lives annually. According to a recent World Health Organization report, preventable disease, such as malaria, claims more lives than today's conflicts put together. Of 300 to 500 million clinical cases annually, 1.5 to 2.7 million lives are lost. In this connection, Solomon Islands suffers higher rates of malaria and maternal mortality than any other country in the Pacific region. My delegation is pleased to see the summit agree on the establishment and implementation of "quick win" initiatives, such as free distribution of treated bed nets and antimalarial medicines. But more needs to be done; a comprehensive malaria eradication programme on public and environmental health must be initiated and implemented simultaneously.

Despite these overwhelming facts, the world continues to spend even more on military programmes and equipment. The lack of progress on disarmament and non-proliferation, with the continuing threat of terrorism, begs the question as to whether the world has indeed become safer, more stable and protected, as the founders of the United Nations Charter envisioned. It further raises the question whether international frameworks and cooperation agreements have, in fact, contained today's threats.

Solomon Islands condemns terrorism in all its forms. In this regard, we are embarking on a legislative process, with New Zealand's support, to increase our national capacity in enhancing regional security arrangements through the Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security and the Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation, particularly as concerns threats posed by international terrorism and transnational crimes.

In keeping with this year's theme, "For a stronger and more effective United Nations: the follow-up and implementation of the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005", we are faced with the challenge of continuing the reform process. As my Prime Minister pointed out last week during the high-level summit, we must not solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions, but rather with a new vision that will build a stronger multilateral system to confront threats and challenges in the twenty-first century. Solomon Islands notes and supports the Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) as a starting point for change.

Current reforms to rejuvenate the multilateral system must occur at three levels — international, regional and national. The forthcoming Doha process, beginning in December of this year, will provide another opportunity for the international community to equitably spread the fruits of globalization, take to task the imbalance that exists within the economic international system and address the challenges of vulnerable and fragile States. The Doha development agenda must accord stable and predictable market access to all least developed countries' products, technology transfer and human resources development. For Solomon Islands to share the fruits of the multilateral trading system in a meaningful way, it must first address the domestic bottlenecks that impede its full participation, such as supply-side restraints and other "behind-the-door" complementary policies that are not conducive to a business-friendly environment.

The Brussels Declaration and the Programme for Action for the Least Developed Countries will be reviewed beginning next year. The lack of implementation of the Brussels Programme speaks of the international community's commitment to 700 million of the world's most vulnerable persons. Solomon Islands is off track in terms of meeting its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) obligation; however, as a least developed country in the Asia/Pacific region, it is committed to meeting its MDGs and seeks international support and attention in this endeavour. Poverty has no boundaries, and we acknowledge and support the Jakarta Declaration. For the MDGs and other benefits to be realized and sustained, Solomon Islands will need to grow its economy. Solomon Islands also calls for a greater in-country presence on the part of the United Nations to work in partnership with us to meet the Goals.

Solomon Islands supports the proposal to establish the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission will play a difficult and important role in assisting countries that are emerging from conflict situations to reintegrate, reconstruct and rebuild State institutions in order to maintain peace, security and

economic stability. In that light, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is a shining example from which the Commission could draw lessons. It has demonstrated that, with courage and determination, the principles and institutions of democracy and human rights can be safeguarded and protected. A two-pronged approach of law and order complemented by economic security and carried out in the spirit of true partnership will create an opportunity for peace to prosper. Solomon Islands also welcomes the Assembly's endorsement of the concept of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as contained in the summit's outcome document.

Solomon Islands would like to express its deep appreciation to Australia, New Zealand and our good friends and neighbours, the Pacific Island countries for their continued support and contribution to Regional Assistance Mission. We could not have done it without them, and I thank them.

Solomon Islands needs to progress beyond the initial crisis of law and order, but the challenge remains to nurture the country and build an economy to sustain it. Per capita income in Solomon Islands has currently dropped to more than 20 per cent below the 1995 level. To repair that situation, Solomon Islands must address harmful past policies of economic mismanagement, a lack of fiscal discipline, faulty governance and capacity constraints at all levels.

Solomon Islands is well endowed with natural resources and a young population that can form the basis of a good labour supply, but it lacks both human capital and physical capital, with poor infrastructure to lift productivity and deliver sustainable growth that is broad-based, rurally focused and people-centred.

That is why the Government is initiating a strategy to attract and build capital. The strategy hinges on establishing a stable macroeconomic environment, creating simple business-friendly tax and regulatory regimes and improving infrastructure and good governance. With respect to establishing a credible fiscal policy, we have returned the budget to surpluses. Revenues have been enhanced. Expenditures have been tightened and prioritized. Monetary policies are being fine-tuned and aligned. State-owned enterprises continue to be reformed, with steps taken to remove barriers and improve efficient shipping networks, which are critical for island nations. Those initiatives will be coupled with a new draft investment law, a credible budget for 2006 and the introduction of a fair and simple tax reform bill, which will be submitted to the Parliament at its next sitting.

Debt levels remain crippling, amounting to more than 100 per cent of the gross domestic product of the Solomon Islands. Talks with creditors have begun to establish a workable debt strategy. The innovative approach advocated by the Philippines of a debt-for-equity swap to finance MDG projects is worth looking into.

Capacity-building in governance that is free from corruption is vital for rural development, health and education. Leadership and governance, which are critical for stability and economic development, are being improved by clarifying rules and expectations and by adopting an outcome-oriented approach. That will improve the transparency of public processes and the effectiveness of institutions.

Solomon Islands acknowledges the contributions of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Japan, the European Union, Taiwan, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, among other donor partners, in support of Government initiatives to rebuild our fragile and shattered State. Solomon Islands must consolidate the gains achieved in the past two years on the security and economic fronts and move forward constructively. Much is yet to be done.

On climate change, the world continues to experience changing weather patterns and has seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Small island developing States (SIDS), such as Solomon Islands, are more vulnerable and susceptible to natural disasters, and we call for the international community to renew its focus on, and concrete commitment to, the issue of climate change, in line with the summit's outcome document. My delegation welcomes the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol in February this year and calls on those countries that have not yet ratified the Protocol to do so at their earliest convenience.

In the light of the Asian tsunami of last December, it would be cost-effective for the world to invest in mitigation measures, in particular renewable energy resources. The Hyogo strategy of the Kobe Conference and the Mauritius Strategy of January this year provide an excellent starting point. Sadly, however, the Group of Eight meeting on climate

change did not take decisive action. For that reason, Solomon Islands, as a member of the Alliance of Small Island States, urges the Group of Eight to reconsider the issue, because the environment has an impact on the physical survival of small island developing States.

Closer to home, Solomon Islands wishes to acknowledge the completion of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, with the successful election in Papua New Guinea's newly autonomous province of Bougainville. We wish our closest Melanesian neighbour every success in building on the political gains made so far, and we assure Bougainville of our commitment to all bilateral cooperative arrangements. Solomon Islands also acknowledges Papua New Guinea's ongoing bilateral assistance to Solomon Islands.

With respect to Security Council reform, Solomon Islands believes that the membership of the Council should reflect the political and economic realities of our time. In that regard, Solomon Islands supports the expansion of the Security Council and feels that a country such as Japan, which has strong bilateral links with Solomon Islands, should be accorded a permanent seat on the Council. Japan's inclusion will contribute to bridging the divide between the multilateral institutions and Member States.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. The results have been mixed. Solomon Islands believes that improving the welfare of women is an indispensable requirement for sustainable security. At the regional level, issues relating to the empowerment of women are being incorporated into the Pacific Plan, which will be discussed by Pacific Islands Forum leaders in October this year.

The United Nations was founded on the principle of maintaining international peace and security. Over the years, some threats continue to receive more attention than others. The Anti-Secession Law enacted by the People's Republic of China in March this year has threatened peace and security on the Taiwan Strait. The situation creates a security vacuum that, if left unattended, will continue to fester and will put in question the credibility of this premier multilateral institution. There is no mechanism to address such threats within the parameters of the United Nations Charter.

Solomon Islands therefore renews its call to have the issue debated in the General Assembly. The time has now come for this body to allow Taiwan, a major player in the international economic system, to take its rightful place in the United Nations. The Assembly cannot continue to ignore the plight of the 23 million people of Taiwan. Solomon Islands regrets the manner in which the Assembly has dealt with the issue, allowing certain countries to dictate the agenda.

With respect to the reform of the Secretariat, Solomon Islands would like to see the Secretariat reflect the diversity of its membership. The current recruitment process of having external, rather than in-country, examinations has deterred potential applicants from small island developing States from applying, given the associated expenses.

In conclusion, Solomon Islands supports multilateralism, and I assure the President of our ongoing support for United Nations reform.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Salome Zourabichvili, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mrs. Zourabichvili (Georgia) (*spoke in French*): I should first like to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election as President at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I assure him of my delegation's full support for the important work to be accomplished at this session. I would also like to extend my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping for his tireless efforts and vision for change he has demonstrated so amply during his presidency.

(*spoke in English*)

Our Organization is now at a turning point in its history. Sixty years after its founding, having confronted many challenges, faced many threats, been defied by so many conflicts, the United Nations is now entering the twenty-first century with the obligation to reform itself.

The bipolar world has come to an end, and new threats of a global nature have emerged: international terrorism, conflicts of a different breed, development and global environmental challenges. I want here to renew to the delegation of the United States of America a message of solidarity from the Georgian people in the face of the New Orleans tragedy. Our Organization has no other choice but to adapt, to find new instruments and to establish a renewed credibility, which can only be based on a proven efficiency, results and visible effects. Words do not suffice; deeds are expected from us all.

We consider the outcome document adopted by the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting as a substantial step in the right direction. This document deals with all the real issues that, as we all know, are going to define tomorrow's world and affect our Organization's fate.

Whether we are talking about eradication of poverty, consolidation of peace and security, protection of human rights, protection of displaced persons, need for an effective system of peacekeeping and for a coherent approach to peacebuilding, negative effects of transnational crime, responsibility to protect populations from ethnic cleansing or whether we reaffirm the absolute necessity of a dialogue among cultures and civilizations, all these challenges are of direct relevance for my country.

For Georgia, these threats are not words, these ills are not theory, they are daily realities and directly experienced tragedies. Our support for an effective reform is not a rhetorical stand. Our vital interests are at stake; the future of my country is at stake. Georgia is directly experimenting on its soil the consequences of so-called frozen conflicts. Frozen conflicts lead to the freezing of the economic development of these separatist regions. They freeze the democratic development of the society in those regions. They isolate them and close them, transforming them into outlaws, "black holes" where all kinds of trafficking and criminal activities, possibly including terrorist activities, could develop outside our control or any form of control, outside any law.

Frozen conflicts, as well as active conflicts, call for the development of a real capacity of the United Nations for effective involvement through instruments of peacebuilding. For many years the United Nations has been dealing with the Abkhazian conflict, but unfortunately it has not managed to obtain effective results. It has proved unable to this day to deploy the small police component that was decided upon, unable to implement fully its own resolutions, unable to deploy an effective peacekeeping capability, unable to monitor the human rights violations that are occurring daily and frequently.

Gradually, despite the United Nations, despite regular meetings of the Security Council, and despite the Secretary-General's Group of Friends of Georgia, a regime of apartheid prevails under which Georgians are excluded and forbidden to go back to their land and their homes, and a process of covert annexation is taking place. Thus, Abkhazia will be a litmus test of the renewed efficiency of our Organization, of its capacity to monitor effectively, to manage peacekeeping operations without having to delegate its responsibilities to third parties and to enact finally strategies of effective peacebuilding.

In the case of the South Ossetian conflict in Georgia, we have a similar situation. The President of Georgia has presented two mutually reinforcing peace proposals within a year. One proposal introduced last year before this Assembly set out the three phases for ending the conflict: demilitarization, economic rehabilitation and political dialogue. In December 2004, it was complemented by a full-fledged proposal on a status of broad autonomy, prepared together with the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) and presented to the Council of Europe. But peace plans are not enough. We now need a mechanism through which the international community will effectively support initiatives and policies that are directed towards peaceful resolution of conflicts.

For all these reasons, we are taking the outlines of the new document very seriously and want to see it fully developed and implemented. We welcome and support the creation of an initial operating capability for a standing police capacity. This is a very right step in the very right direction. We welcome the creation of a Human Rights Council. This new body should be more representative, should comply with the highest standards of objectivity and should avoid double standards as well as omissions or silences. An effective monitoring system should be put into place. The strengthening of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights is also a step in the right direction.

We welcome the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission that will develop integrated strategies for post-conflict rehabilitation and recovery. We also need a more effective framework for moving smoothly from peacemaking to peacebuilding, while developing an all-inclusive and coherent strategy within which the United Nations will fully assume its responsibilities. The new Peacebuilding Commission should be fully representative of the countries that have been or are the most directly affected by conflicts. Also, given the special fate of women and children in conflict and post-conflict situations, gender representation should be given additional attention. "Representation is essential", "Knowledge is key" — as we, female foreign

ministers, have mentioned in our letter to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly.

Finally, Georgia supports the reform and revitalization of the Security Council — a more effective and efficient, more democratic, more transparent body is called for. Georgia supports the enlargement proposals in order to give non-permanent members a better chance to contribute to major decisions. Transparency and improved decision-making procedures are a must. Georgia is convinced that if there is an adequate political will, the relevant agreement on a reformed Security Council can be reached at the present session of the General Assembly. This is our wish. Moreover, this is a necessity. Our credibility is at stake.

Today not only the United Nations but all the major international organizations are going through a difficult process of adjustment, of renewal and reappraisal. That is the case of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Some will survive and grow stronger. Some will have to yield ground to other forums that are more flexible, less bureaucratic and more in line with today's realities.

The United Nations has today started an invaluable process of readjustment and rejuvenation. If our work is successful, this process will go to its term.

The United Nations will cease to be a mere forum for calling for peaceful solutions; it will become the instrument the world needs, the instrument for resolving the conflicts that tarnish the image of today's global world, the instrument for effectively responding to the newer global threats that endanger our development and our stability.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Klaus Scharioth, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Scharioth (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation*): Please accept my congratulations, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this historic sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I wish you every success. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the outgoing President for his dedicated work at the fifty-ninth session. I endorse the statement of the European Union (EU) presidency.

The debate at last week's summit highlighted one important point, namely, that peace, development, security and human rights are inseparably linked. One cannot address human rights and security without also addressing development. All of those issues are at the very heart of our policies.

People are waiting for our solutions to the pressing problems of development. We must achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Of that we are acutely aware, both in Germany and in Europe. The EU plan to reach the 0.7 per cent official development assistance goal by 2015, and the Group-of Eight (G-8) commitments made at Gleneagles, substantially strengthen the financial basis of our work.

We are also willing to forge new paths by making use of innovative financing mechanisms.

At the same time, frameworks establishing fair conditions for international trade are a prerequisite if poorer States are to share the benefits of globalization. The EU is leading the way with its "Everything But Arms" initiative, which grants the least developed countries duty-free and quota-free market access. In that context, we must do all we can to make the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Hong Kong in December, a success. Only in that way can we bring the Doha round negotiations to a successful conclusion.

We also know that excessive indebtedness curbs growth and development. The realignment of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative after 1999 has considerably reduced the indebtedness of some 27 States. Germany has to date forgiven €6.5 billion of debt and has earmarked a further €4 billion for the continuation of the HIPC initiative.

Debt relief is, however, dependent on all creditors spreading the burden fairly among themselves. We are alarmed by the fact that commercial and State creditors outside the Paris Club are doing less and less to live up to their responsibilities. I would like to seize this opportunity to call for your support at the forthcoming annual meeting of the Bretton Woods institutions, for the G-8 proposal and for an extensive cancellation of debts — including multilateral debts — for the countries concerned.

All of the foregoing emphasizes the great importance we attach to the global partnership for

development. That partnership is not, however, a one-way street. It also requires a commitment by partner States to put in place the conditions for development — that is, democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and anti-corruption measures.

Climate protection and development are also closely intertwined. Of course, everyone must have access to energy. Nevertheless, all States must do their part to prevent the ominous advance of climate change. In late November the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol will meet in Montreal. There, we will have the opportunity to adopt effective mechanisms to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beyond 2012. That is precisely the policy pursued by the Kyoto Protocol, and it is a policy we will adhere to.

This year two natural catastrophes — the tsunami in the Indian Ocean and Hurricane Katrina in the United States of America — have clearly demonstrated just how vulnerable our societies are to natural disasters. We have all learned just how important disaster prevention is. As host to the Third International Conference on Early Warning, which will be held in Bonn in March 2006, Germany hopes to contribute to making better use of and improving early warning mechanisms and thereby limiting the scale of the damage caused by such disasters. Here I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our invitation to all Member States to join us in making the Bonn Conference a success.

For years, United Nations engagement has been hailed all over the world as a welcome sign of protection and assistance, of peace and reconstruction. Last Sunday saw the first free parliamentary elections in Afghanistan under the new Constitution. The Government of Afghanistan, with a full complement of democratically legitimated institutions, is now prepared to assume responsibility for the further reconstruction of the country. By going to the polls, millions of women and men in Afghanistan have proved that they have opted for democracy. Our thanks go to the United Nations, which worked hard to make those elections possible.

In his latest report on Afghanistan (A/60/224) the Secretary-General announced that the United Nations will remain committed to assisting the country after the elections. I heartily endorse that commitment; such help is indispensable. For even if the Bonn process, launched four years ago, has now been brought to a successful conclusion, the international community will still need to stand by Afghanistan. Germany, too, will continue to do its utmost to support the country.

The President returned to the Chair.

Ten years after the conclusion of the Dayton Agreement, and six years after the end of the Kosovo conflict, the situation in the Western Balkans has improved tangibly. Nonetheless, major progress is still required in the political, legal and economic fields. The people of that region must genuinely come to terms with their past, and the parties to the conflict must be reconciled. In that connection, we call for full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

The Middle East still faces great challenges. As its neighbours, we in Europe have a strategic interest in peace and stability in the region. We are convinced that only through reform, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law can lasting stability be guaranteed. The free and fair parliamentary elections in Palestine and Lebanon are encouraging signs of change.

The Middle East peace process has also gained new momentum over past months. We emphatically welcome the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern part of the West Bank. Now it is vital that Israelis, Palestinians and the international community do all they can to lay the foundations for political and economic stability in the Gaza Strip. Efforts should be focused on a two-State solution based on the road map. The objective remains a viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel within secure and recognized borders.

The international community is united in its determination to help Iraq establish democracy and the rule of law. We want all Iraqis to be able to live free from fear and material hardship. The forces of terror and violence must not and shall not be permitted to win the upper hand. The Middle East needs a stable, prosperous Iraq.

Here, too, the United Nations is making its contribution towards the process of political transition and reconstruction. That is why we have provided considerable financial assistance for the protection force whose presence allows the United Nations to work in Iraq. It is also why Germany has, at Iraq's request, advised that country on constitutional issues.

The Iranian nuclear programme continues to be a major cause of concern. Past violations of international obligations, a lack of transparency in its actions, and insufficient cooperation with subsequent investigations have destroyed any confidence that the programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes. With support from the EU High Representative, Germany, France and the United Kingdom have worked with Iran on finding a way to restore confidence. Those efforts have received broad support from the international community. Tehran's continued disregard of International Atomic Energy Agency decisions, however, is further weakening that confidence and the gains made to date are being put at risk for no good reason. We should emphasize that our concerns do not relate to Iran's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

This has never been and will not be put in question. Our concerns do not relate to Iran's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. That has never been and will not be called into question.

We remain prepared to work on solutions which include objective guarantees that the Iranian nuclear programme can serve only peaceful ends. I appeal to Iran to refrain from taking unilateral measures and to return to the negotiating table.

There is general agreement that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is now more than ever a life-threatening risk to us all. It is thus all the more regrettable that no consensus could be reached on the inclusion in the outcome document of a chapter on non-proliferation and disarmament. If we want to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular of nuclear weapons, all States must fulfil their obligations. At the same time, new momentum must be brought to the process of nuclear disarmament.

In that context, I welcome the latest progress made by the six-party talks towards resolving the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. It is a vital first step.

Africa is in many ways a touchstone for and an example of an effective multilateral system. The close cooperation of the United Nations with the African Union, as well as with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has had a beneficial impact in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and, recently, in Burundi. The United Nations is also playing an equally important role in efforts to stabilize the Great Lakes region.

Following the death of John Garang, the peace process in the Sudan requires an even greater commitment by all parties to implement the historic Nairobi peace agreement. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), to which Germany has contributed personnel, is making a major contribution. However, we must not neglect other crisis areas, in particular Darfur. The African Union mission in Darfur has helped to stabilize the security situation in the area where it is stationed.

The variety of problems facing us — poverty, social polarization, global population growth, inadequate water supplies and global climate change, to name only the most pressing — serves to highlight the need for concerted action. We must prepare the United Nations for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Over the past 12 months, reform of the United Nations has been intensively debated. Member States, the High-level Panel and the Secretary-General himself have provided valuable input. Some of their proposals are contained in the outcome document adopted at last week's world summit.

However, only when we have managed to implement those proposals will we be able to speak of true achievement. To be a success, the process requires the active participation of all Member States.

The tasks that the summit has set the General Assembly must be tackled with speed and focus. At this session, the General Assembly must make a breakthrough towards the adoption of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. It must also work on the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission.

Sustainable peace requires more than merely restoring security. The post-conflict peacebuilding phase is particularly crucial. The sooner reconstruction can begin, and the better coordinated the peacemaking and post-conflict recovery efforts are, the better the chances of lasting stabilization. The summit took a vital step in that direction by deciding to establish the Peacebuilding Commission by the end of the year.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report entitled "In larger freedom", states that:

> "No security agenda and no drive for development will be successful unless they are based on ... respect for human dignity". (*A/59/2005, para. 128*)

If we wish to lend greater weight to the protection and promotion of human rights, we must also strengthen the relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms.

Germany therefore welcomes the decision taken by the summit to create a Human Rights Council which will replace the Commission on Human Rights. The General Assembly must now move fast to define the mandate and structures of the Human Rights Council. It must ensure that the new body enjoys greater legitimacy than its predecessor and that its working methods are more effective, especially when it comes to responding to acute crises.

Allow me a last word. A glance at the trouble spots around the world makes it clear that we, the international community, face far more conflicts in the South than we do in the North. Key decisions on settling those conflicts are taken in the Security Council which, under the Charter of the United Nations, has primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace. Its composition, however, still reflects the world of 1945 and not that of the twenty-first century. Adjusting and expanding the membership of the Security Council by adding both permanent and non-permanent members thus remains essential. Any reform of the United Nations that does not include reform of the Security Council is not worthy of the name.

The Security Council is in danger of losing its authority and legitimacy as long as entire continents and major contributors are not adequately represented. Germany and its partners Brazil, India and Japan therefore have submitted a proposal on reform of the Council. It is the only proposal that includes a comprehensive reform of the Security Council and its working methods. We are convinced that it is the only proposal capable of obtaining the necessary two-thirds majority in the General Assembly.

Reform of the Security Council is an indispensable part of the overhaul of the United Nations. In last week's summit document, we all pledged to swiftly advance those reforms. We do not need only progress; we need results. The time is ripe for radical reform. Let us use this session of the General Assembly to finally resolve this issue, which is so vital to the future of the United Nations.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oskaras Jusys, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania): Lithuania welcomes this effort — the most extensive and ambitious ever made — to renew the United Nations. We must ensure that the summit commitments we all have undertaken are implemented and that they produce real and tangible results, in order to improve the Organization's capacity to act adequately, effectively, expeditiously and in the best interests of us all. Their implementation should also enable us to give hope to the vulnerable and the destitute and to make the world a better place for all.

We welcome the affirmation by the outcome document of the inextricable link between development, security and human rights. That, in our view, is a sine qua non for all our future actions. We welcome the reaffirmation of the commitments regarding the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. As a member State of the European Union, we are proud of the Union's commitment to double its overall aid level by the year 2010, including a considerable increase in aid to Africa.

We support the establishment of a Democracy Fund for countries seeking to establish or strengthen their democratic practices. In our view, that Fund will contribute to maximizing the impact of development assistance by focusing on the improvement of governance standards. Transparent and democratic governance practices can make quite a difference in the performance of countries that are otherwise quite similar in terms of their natural resources and social structure.

We emphasize the role of international trade in promoting economic growth and development and thus in fighting poverty. We therefore add our voice to calls for a rapid, ambitious and development-oriented completion of the Doha trade round.

Furthermore, Lithuania is convinced that all development and all relevant related strategies should have a built-in element of environmental sustainability. We welcome the language of the outcome document to that effect but believe that we should go further.

In particular, we underline the importance of going beyond Kyoto by initiating negotiations on the development of a more inclusive and equitable international framework for climate change beyond the year 2012.

Lithuania welcomes the strong and unconditional condemnation of terrorism in the outcome document.

We call on the General Assembly to complete, at its sixtieth session, work on a comprehensive convention on terrorism and on a global counter-terrorism strategy, as proposed by the Secretary-General earlier this year.

We strongly welcome the endorsement of "responsibility to protect" populations from genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. This is of fundamental importance; it is an important step that gives us hope that we shall no longer look away nor stand idly by as entire populations are being killed.

Lithuania fully supports the proposals regarding United Nations management reform. We hope the blueprint to be submitted by the Secretary-General will not fall victim to endless debates by Member States but, rather, lead to tangible changes, improving the Organization's accountability, transparency, efficiency and professionalism, while assuring the highest ethical standards.

Too often in the past, we have seen nations emerging from conflict lapse into disruption and chaos, thus destabilizing entire regions. We therefore call for rapid progress in making the Peacebuilding Commission fully operational before the end of this year.

While expressing our satisfaction with the agreement to double resources for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, we urge all nations to take conclusive decisions in the coming months on the basis of the wording agreed to by the vast majority of countries in establishing a robust and effective Human Rights Council.

At the same time, we have to admit that the outcome document is lacking considerably in some areas. We are well aware that the reform process is not a one-time event. As we proceed along the path of United Nations reform, we must make sure these areas are not left out.

First, there is the issue of impunity. The fight against impunity and the rendering of justice must be part and parcel of our common efforts to improve the human rights situation worldwide. We stress our support for the International Criminal Court, as well as the existing ad hoc and mixed criminal tribunals and other mechanisms for international justice.

Secondly, there is the question of Security Council reform which cannot be delayed further, especially if we really care about restoring the authority and credibility of the United Nations. The Council's working methods must be improved to provide greater input from non-member States. Its membership must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, with due consideration being paid to equitable geographical representation and the recent emergence of new international actors and contributors. Lithuania has long supported the candidacies of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council. We appreciate the aspirations of India and Brazil to undertake the honourable responsibility of permanent membership, and we agree that Africa's representation in both categories of membership is long overdue.

After 11 years of debate on the issue of Security Council reform, it is time to admit that we are unlikely to produce new arguments without repeating ourselves indefinitely. Lithuania, therefore, calls on all Member States to assume their responsibilities and to take action.

Finally, let me touch upon the failure to agree, in the outcome document, on the issues of non-proliferation and disarmament. This is the major failure of our summit, especially in the light of the unfortunate conclusion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference earlier this year. We must honour our earlier agreements and obligations, restore consensus and invest all our efforts in search of agreement on this crucial issue. We therefore call on all nations to rally around the initiative put forward by Norway and a group of like-minded countries; we believe this initiative could become a basis of viable consensus and future cooperative action.

Last December, we witnessed an unprecedented outburst of solidarity with the Asian tsunami victims. These past few weeks, our hearts were with the people of the United States, whose citizens saw their lives shattered and whole communities destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. We offered whatever assistance we could to those affected and we extend our condolences to all those who have suffered from this enormous devastation.

In moments of grief and sorrow, we are one. Pain has no nationality, no religion, no race. Similarly, we should all be one in our solidarity. We should not have to wait for new cataclysms and large-scale tragedies in order to agree on the need to build a renewed United Nations for the new century. As Secretary-General

Kofi Annan has repeatedly noted, in this globalized, interrelated world, it is the collective interest that is often in our best national interest.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Williams (United Kingdom): I would like to respond to the remarks made today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain about Gibraltar. The British Government welcomes and shares Spain's willingness to work in a constructive spirit. We agree that issues relating to Gibraltar can only be resolved through dialogue and, therefore, welcome the newly established trilateral forum on Gibraltar, to which all parties, including Gibraltar, can express their views.

Our aim remains to build a better future for the people of Gibraltar and, in doing that, the United Kingdom Government stands by its long-term commitment to the people of Gibraltar to respect their wishes.

Mr. Sadeghi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today the General Assembly heard a number of unsubstantiated allegations about my country from the representative of the Israeli regime, a regime that has been based on violence, occupation, corruption, state terrorism and bloodshed.

Israel, throughout its entire dark history, and ever since its inception, has suffered profoundly from a lack of legitimacy. So it is not surprising that the representative of such a regime — ruled constantly by those who are culprits in various crimes against humanity and war crimes — makes such baseless, fabricated propaganda the remedy for its illegitimacy.

It is an open secret that Israel has continuously and purposely violated many international laws and norms, as well as dozens of United Nations resolutions to which the response of this illegitimate and irresponsible regime has been nothing but complete defiance. In this context, particular reference can be made to the mischievous policy of the Israeli regime on the nuclear issue, which is a showcase of its concealment and unabated pursuance of a nuclear arsenal during the past decades. It is indisputable that such an ill-intentioned policy has been threatening the peace and security of the volatile Middle East region for years. In fact, the Israeli nuclear danger and its missile capability, coupled with its wicked behaviour and satanic intentions, present a real threat, not only to regional peace and security but also to the whole world.

Therefore, this threat needs to be urgently and decisively addressed by the international community. Indeed, this regime should face a united front and be kept under continuous pressure to relinquish its nuclear programme and to place all its nuclear facilities under international monitoring. It is worth mentioning that the only existing obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the non-adherence of this regime to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its continued, clandestine operation of unsafe guarded nuclear facilities, with the help and technological assistance from a certain State. This regime has paid no attention to the constant international call in different forums, particularly in the 2000 NPT Review Conference which, by name, called upon this regime to accede to the NPT immediately and without any conditions.

Moreover, the said regime has never been a party to the international instruments on weapons of mass destruction — namely, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the NPT.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a party to the CWC, BWC and NPT, is committed to all provisions of those instruments and, while remaining transparent through making declarations and accepting international monitoring and inspection by the competent international bodies, in particular the International Atomic Energy Agency, has always stated that it would not abandon its right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology due to politically motivated accusations.

The baseless allegations and the statement of the representative of the Zionist regime in the Assembly today demonstrate clearly that those who are putting my country under growing, unreasonable and unfair pressure are in fact trying to serve the interests of the illegitimate Israeli regime. We believe that the

international community is well aware of that ploy and will therefore not give in to pressure aimed at protecting the illegal policies and practices of the Zionist regime and its illegitimate interests.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I just wanted — and I feel pretty confident that I am doing it on behalf of many in this Hall — to express our appreciation for a lecture on human rights, world terror and nuclear proliferation from one of the world's greatest experts in that field.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.